

FEBRUARY 1, 2011

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

What
MAKES A
Marriage
Last?



THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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FROM OUR COVER

3 Why the Breakdown?

4 Solutions to Common Complaints

- "My mate and I are growing apart"
- "I am no longer getting what I want out of this relationship"
- "My mate does not live up to his (or her) obligations"
- "My wife is not submissive"
- "My husband does not show initiative"
- "I can no longer stand my mate's annoying habits"



REGULAR FEATURES

- ◀ 10 The Bible Changes Lives
- 14 Draw Close to God
—“Remember Me, O My God, for Good”
- 15 Did You Know?
- 16 Learn From God's Word—Who Is God?
- 18 Keys to Family Happiness
—Inculcate Moral Values in Your Children
- ◀ 25 Teach Your Children
—She Was Loved by God and by Her Friends
- 27 Our Readers Ask . . .

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 21 Are You Prepared for the Most Important Day of the Year?
- 28 “This Is Your Day”



Why the Breakdown?

“Pharisees came up to [Jesus], intent on tempting him and saying: ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on every sort of ground?’”—Matthew 19:3.

SOME who lived in Jesus’ day questioned whether marriages could or should last. To them, Jesus said: “Did you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh’? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart.”* (Matthew 19:4-6) Obviously, God intended for marriages to last.

In many lands today, some 40 percent or

* The Bible does allow for divorce on the grounds of sexual immorality.—Matthew 19:9.

more of all marriages are “put apart,” ending in divorce. Is the Bible’s advice regarding marriage hopelessly out-of-date? Could it be that marriages fail because the arrangement itself is faulty?

Consider this illustration: Two couples buy the same model car. One couple maintain their vehicle well and drive it carefully. Their car does not break down. The other couple invest no time or energy in maintaining their vehicle, and they drive recklessly. That car breaks down and is abandoned. Where does the fault lie for the second outcome—with the car or with the owners? Obviously, the owners bear much of the responsibility.

Similarly, the fact that many marriages fail does not mean that the institution of marriage is somehow flawed. The millions of marriages that succeed prove otherwise. Those marriages bring happiness and stability to individuals, to families, and to communities. But marriage, like a car, needs good care and regular maintenance if it is to last.

Whether your marriage is days or decades old, the Bible’s advice on how to maintain and strengthen it really does work. On the following pages, note some examples.

Solutions to Common Complaints

THE Bible does not claim that marriage is easy. The apostle Paul was inspired by God to write that married couples would have to deal with “everyday troubles.” (1 Corinthians 7:28, *Today’s English Version*) But a married couple can do much to lessen the troubles they experience and increase the joy they bring to each other. Consider the following six common complaints made by husbands and wives, and see how applying Bible principles can help.



*Do we make time for
each other?*

1

COMPLAINT:

“My mate and I are growing apart.”

BIBLE PRINCIPLE:

“Make sure of the more important things.”

—PHILIPPIANS 1:10.

Your marriage is one of the most important things in your life. It deserves priority. So check whether your schedules contribute to this complaint. Do not let the necessary business of life cause you and your spouse to live separate lives. Of course, secular work and other unavoidable situations may temporarily force you out of each other’s company. But you can and should put a limit on anything over which you have control—like time spent on hobbies or with friends.

THE **WATCHTOWER**
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Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah’s Witnesses, using one of the addresses below. For a complete list of addresses, see www.watchtower.org/address.

4

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2

COMPLAINT:

"I am no longer getting what I want out of this relationship."

BIBLE PRINCIPLE:

"Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person."

—1 CORINTHIANS 10:24.

Some spouses, however, may take on extra work or hobbies just so they do not have to spend time with their mate. Such individuals are not "growing apart" from their spouse. They are running away from problems. If you or your mate fall into that category, you need to identify the underlying issues and deal with them. Only by sharing your life with your mate can the two of you grow together and "become one flesh" in the fullest sense.—Genesis 2:24.

How some have applied this advice: Andrew* and Tanji, an Australian couple, have been married for ten years. Andrew says: "I've learned that working too much and taking on too many social obligations can be dangerous to a marriage. So my wife and I *make* time to talk and share our feelings with each other."

Dave and Jane, who live in the United States and have been married for 22 years, devote the first half hour of every evening to sharing their experiences and thoughts. Jane says: "This is such an important time that we let nothing interfere with it."

* Some names have been changed.

A person who is primarily concerned with what he or she is *getting* from the marriage will never be truly happy, even if that individual remarries many times. Marriage works when each mate focuses more on giving than on receiving. Jesus states the reason: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

How some have applied this advice: Maria and Martin, who live in Mexico, have been



Do I try to give more than I get?

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^o CD also available.

^o MP3 CD-ROM also available.

^o Audio recordings also available at www.jw.org.

married for 39 years. But the road has not always been smooth. They remember one rough patch in particular. “In the midst of a heated confrontation,” recalls Maria, “I said something particularly disrespectful to Martin. He became very angry. I tried to explain that I didn’t really mean what I said, that I was just upset. But he wouldn’t listen.” Martin says, “During that argument, I began thinking that we could no longer live together, that I should just quit trying to make the marriage work.”

3

COMPLAINT:

“My mate does not live up to his (or her) obligations.”

BIBLE PRINCIPLE:

“Each of us will render an account for himself to God.”—ROMANS 14:12.

Without a doubt, a marriage will not function at its best if only one mate contributes to its success. But the situation will be worse if both mates are negligent, each blaming the other.

If you dwell primarily on what your mate should be doing, you doom yourself to a life of misery. Especially will that be so if you use your mate’s shortcomings as an excuse to abdicate your own responsibilities. On the other hand, if you strive to be a good husband or a good wife, your marriage will likely improve. (1 Peter 3:1-3) More important, you prove to God that you honor his arrangement of marriage, and your actions will bring him great pleasure.—1 Peter 2:19.

How some have applied this advice: Kim and her husband, who live in Korea, have been married for 38 years. Kim says: “Some-

Martin needed respect. Maria desired understanding. Neither was getting what he or she wanted.

How were they able to solve the problem? “I gave myself time to cool down,” says Martin, “and we both decided to apply the Bible’s wise counsel to be respectful and kind. Over the years, we have learned that no matter how many times problems come up, we can overcome them if we pray for God’s help and apply the advice found in the Bible.” —Isaiah 48:17, 18; Ephesians 4:31, 32.

times my husband gets annoyed with me and stops talking to me, and I don’t even know why. That makes me feel that his love for me has cooled. I’ve sometimes found myself thinking, ‘Why does he want me to understand him when he does not try to understand me?’ ”

Kim could focus on the injustice of the situation and on what her mate is not doing. Instead, she chooses a different course. “Rather than remain upset,” says Kim, “I’ve learned that it is best to take the initiative in trying to make peace. In the end, we are both able to calm down and talk things over peacefully.”—James 3:18.



4

COMPLAINT:

"My wife is not submissive."

BIBLE PRINCIPLE:

"The head of every man is the Christ."

—1 CORINTHIANS 11:3.

A husband who feels that his wife is not submissive should first examine whether he is willing to show submission to his Head, Jesus Christ. A husband can show his submission by following Jesus' example.

"Husbands," wrote the apostle Paul, "continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it." (Ephesians 5:25) Jesus did not "lord it over" his disciples. (Mark 10:42-44) He gave his followers clear direction and corrected them when necessary. But he was never harsh. He was kind to them and made allowances for their limitations. (Matthew 11:29, 30; Mark 6:30, 31; 14:37, 38) He always put their interests ahead of his own.—Matthew 20:25-28.

A husband needs to ask himself this question, 'Is my view of headship and of women in general influenced more by local custom than by the counsel and examples found in the Bible?' For instance, what would you think of a woman who disagreed with her husband's viewpoint and firmly but respectfully expressed her dissenting view? In the Bible, Abraham's wife, Sarah, is held up as an example of a submissive wife. (1 Peter 3:1, 6) However, she spoke her mind when necessary, such as when Abraham failed to see certain dangers that threatened the family.—Genesis 16:5; 21:9-12.

Obviously, Abraham did not terrorize Sarah into silence. He was not a tyrant. Likewise, a husband who follows Bible counsel

will not browbeat his wife, demanding that she be subject to his every whim. He will earn his wife's respect by exercising his headship in a compassionate manner.

How some have applied this advice: James, who lives in England and has been married for eight years, says: "I am learning not to make important decisions without consulting my wife. I try not to think only of myself. Instead, I aim to put her needs ahead of my own."

George lives in the United States and has been married for 59 years. He says: "I have tried to treat my wife, not as a second-class citizen, but as an intelligent and capable partner."—Proverbs 31:10.

Do I consider my wife's opinion before making a decision?



5

COMPLAINT:

"My husband does not show initiative."

BIBLE PRINCIPLE:

***"The truly wise woman has built up her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands."*—PROVERBS 14:1.**

If your husband is reluctant to make decisions or to take the lead in managing the household, you have at least three options. (1) You could constantly point out his failings or (2) you could usurp his role as head of the family or (3) you could sincerely commend him for any efforts he does make. If you choose either of the first two options, you will tear down your house with your own hands. Choosing the third option will help you build up, or strengthen, your marriage.

Many men value respect even more than love. So if you make your husband feel respected—make him feel that his efforts to take the lead in the family are effective and appreciated—he will likely improve in his role. Of course, you will at times disagree with your husband on a matter. The two of you need to discuss those issues. (Proverbs 18:13) But the words you choose and the tone you use will help either to tear down or to build up your marriage. (Proverbs 21:9; 27:15) Express yourself respectfully, and you will be more likely to achieve the outcome you want—a husband who does not hesitate to take the lead.

How some have applied this advice: Michele, who lives in the United States and has been married for 30 years, says: "Because my mother raised me and my sisters without the support of a husband, she was a very strong, independent woman. I tend to imitate those



traits. So I constantly have to work on showing proper subjection. For example, I have learned to consult my husband instead of just making my own decisions."

Rachel, who lives in Australia and has been married to Mark for 21 years, was also influenced by her background. "My mother was never submissive to my father," she recalls. "Arguments and disrespect were the norm. In the early years of my marriage, I imitated my mother. Over the years, though, I have learned the value of applying the Bible's advice about showing respect. Now Mark and I enjoy a much happier marriage."

6

COMPLAINT:

"I can no longer stand my mate's annoying habits."

BIBLE PRINCIPLE:

***"Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if any one has a cause for complaint against another."*—COLOSSIANS 3:13.**

When you were first dating, you were likely so focused on your prospective mate's

fine qualities that you barely noticed his or her flaws. Can you do the same now? No doubt, your mate gives you legitimate cause for complaint. However, ask yourself, ‘On which of my mate’s qualities will I choose to focus—the good or the bad?’

Jesus used a powerful illustration that shows the need for us to overlook the flaws we see in others. “Why . . . do you look at the straw in your brother’s eye,” he asked, “but do not consider the rafter in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:3) A straw could be a small piece of grass. A rafter, on the other hand, is a bulky length of timber used to hold up the roof of a house. His point? “First extract the rafter from your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to extract the straw from your brother’s eye.”—Matthew 7:5.

Jesus introduced this illustration with a sobering warning. “Stop judging,” he said, “that you may not be judged; for with what judgment you are judging, you will be judged.” (Matthew 7:1, 2) If you would like God to overlook your faults—the rafter in your eye—it is in your best interests to overlook flaws in your mate.—Matthew 6:14, 15.

Do I focus on my mate’s good qualities?



How some have applied this advice: Jenny, who lives in England and has been married to Simon for nine years now, says: “I find that my most frequent cause for irritation with my husband is his tendency not to plan ahead, to handle things at the last minute. That’s ironic, because when we were dating, I used to love that he was so spontaneous. However, I now recognize that I too have faults, like being too controlling. Simon and I are learning to overlook each other’s little imperfections.”

Curt, who is married to Michele, quoted earlier, states: “If you focus on your mate’s annoying traits, those faults will seem to get bigger and bigger. I prefer to focus on the qualities that made me fall in love with Michele to start with.”

The Secret to Success

These few examples illustrate that challenges in a marriage are inevitable but not insurmountable. What is the secret to success? Develop a love for God and a willingness to apply the counsel contained in his Word, the Bible.

Alex and Itohan, who live in Nigeria and have been married for more than 20 years, have learned that secret. Alex says: “I’ve discovered that nearly any marital difficulty can be resolved if a couple applies Bible principles.” His wife says: “We have learned the importance of praying together regularly and of applying the Bible’s advice to be sincerely loving and patient with each other. We now have fewer problems than when we first got married.”

Would you like to learn more about how the practical counsel found in God’s Word can benefit your family? If so, ask Jehovah’s Witnesses to discuss with you chapter 14 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach*?

* Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

THE BIBLE CHANGES LIVES

HOW was a barmaid who swore, drank excessively, and experimented with drugs able to change her lifestyle? Why did a former politician who disliked religion become a minister of religion? What challenges did a combat instructor with the Russian police force have to overcome to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses? Read what these individuals have to say.



"My mother and I enjoy a restored relationship."

—NATALIE HAM

YEAR BORN: 1965

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: AUSTRALIA

HISTORY: EXPERIMENTED WITH DRUGS



MY PAST: I grew up in the small fishing town of Robe, South Australia. In such communities, the local hotel is the social hub. Parents spend a lot of time at the hotel, so their children are raised around alcohol abuse, bad language, and cigarette smoke.

By the age of 12, I was smoking, had a broad vocabulary of swear words, and was in constant conflict with my mother. When I was 15, my parents separated, and 18 months later, I left home. I abused alcohol, tried drugs, and led an immoral lifestyle. I was angry and confused. But having attended five years of martial arts and women's defense training, I felt that I could look after my-

self. Even so, in my quieter, more reflective times, I was overcome with sadness and would pray to God, asking him to help me. "Just don't ask me to go to church," I would say to him.

Sometime later, a friend who was religious but didn't belong to any particular church gave me a Bible. Like our other friends, he smoked drugs. Yet, he professed a sincere belief in God and convinced me that I should get baptized. He took me to a local lake and baptized me.

From then on, I felt that I had a special relationship with God. However, I never did find time to read the Bible.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: In 1988, two Witnesses knocked on my door. One of them asked me, "Do you know God's name?" The Witness read Psalm 83:18 from his Bible, which states: "That people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." I was floored! After they left, I drove 35 miles (56 km) to a Christian bookstore to check other Bible translations and then looked up the name in a dictionary. Having convinced

myself that God's name is Jehovah, I wondered what else I didn't know.

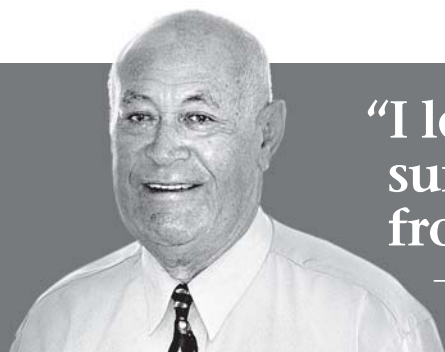
My mother had told me that Jehovah's Witnesses were weird. From the little I knew of them, I thought they were too conservative and didn't know how to have fun. I considered pretending not to be there when they called. But I changed my mind when the time came. I invited them in, and we immediately began studying the Bible.

After each study session, I shared what I had learned with my boyfriend, Craig. He eventually got so annoyed that he took the textbook we were using out of my hands and began reading it. Within three weeks, he concluded that he had found the truth about God. Craig and I eventually stopped taking drugs and abusing alcohol, and I quit my job as a barmaid. To bring our lives into harmo-

ny with Bible standards, we decided to get married.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: At the time we began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, Craig and I were on the verge of splitting up. Today, Craig is a wonderful husband, and we have two beautiful children. We also have treasured friends who share our beliefs.

At first, my mother was angry when she learned that I was associating with Jehovah's Witnesses. However, her concerns were based on misunderstandings. Now my mother and I enjoy a restored relationship. I no longer have a feeling of emptiness deep inside me. Instead, I have direction and purpose in my life, and I feel that my spiritual needs are being satisfied.—Matthew 5:3.



"I learned many surprising things from the Bible."

—ISAKALA PAENIU

YEAR BORN: 1939

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: TUVALU

HISTORY: POLITICIAN

MY PAST: I was born on Nukulae-lae, a beautiful Pacific island that is now part of Tuvalu. Life on the islands was dominated by pastors who received their religious training at a college in Samoa. It was the duty of the island people to feed the pas-



tors and their families daily, to provide accommodations for them, in fact, to give them the best of everything. Even if the islanders did not have enough food for their own families, they were obligated to provide for the pastors.

The pastor on my island ran the village school and taught religion, math, and some geography. I recall seeing the pastor beat students so badly that they were covered in blood. No one, however, dared protest, not even

the parents. The pastor was revered as if he were God himself.

When I was ten, I left home to go to the only government school in the area, which

was on another island. When I graduated, I joined the civil service. At the time, the islands were part of the British colony known as Gilbert and Ellice Islands. I worked in various departments before becoming the editor of the government weekly news sheet. All was going well until I published a letter from a reader that criticized the money being spent in preparation for a visit by the Prince of Wales. The letter writer had used a false name, and my superior demanded to know the real name of the person. I refused to tell him, and this confrontation became widely known.

Soon after that incident, I left the civil service and went into politics. I won an election in Nukulaelae and was appointed to be the Minister of Commerce and Natural Resources. Later, when the people from the Kiribati (formerly Gilbert) and Tuvalu (formerly Ellice) islands were gaining independence from Britain, the governor offered me the post as head of the Tuvalu administration. However, I didn't want to be seen as connected with colonial rule. So I turned down the offer and without that backing ran in the general election for the top political post. I lost. After that, I returned with my wife to my home island and decided to live the normal village life.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE:

Sunday in the islands was the Sabbath and considered as holy by everyone but me. That was my day for sailing and fishing. I did not want to be known as a religious person. My father told me how disappointed he and others were by my actions. But I was determined not to come under the influence of the church.

On one of my trips to Funafuti—the island on which the capital of Tuvalu is located—my younger brother invited me to join

him in attending a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. Later, a Witness missionary gave me a stack of *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines to read. He also gave me a book that exposed the pagan origins of the doctrines that many so-called Christian churches teach. I read that book several times. I learned many surprising things from the Bible, including the fact that Christians are not obliged to keep the weekly Sabbath.* I shared these points with my wife, and she immediately stopped attending church.

I, however, had vowed to have nothing to do with religion. Almost two years passed, but I could not forget the things I had learned. Eventually, I wrote to the missionary on Funafuti, telling him that I was ready to make a change. He hopped on the next available boat and came to help me learn more about the Bible. My father was furious when he found out that I wanted to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. But I told him that I had learned so much about the Bible from the Witnesses that I had made up my mind.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: In 1986, I was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and my wife was baptized a year later. Our two daughters also learned what the Bible teaches and decided to become Jehovah's Witnesses.

Now I have the pleasure of belonging to a religious group who, like the first-century Christians, have no clergy-laity distinction. (Matthew 23:8-12) They also humbly follow Jesus' example and preach to others about God's Kingdom government. (Matthew 4:17) How thankful I am to Jehovah God for allowing me to learn the truth about him and his people!

* For more information, see the article "Should You Keep the Weekly Sabbath?" published in *The Watchtower*, February 1, 2010, pages 11-15.



“The Witnesses didn’t tell me what to believe.”

—ALEXANDER SOSKOV

YEAR BORN: 1971

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: RUSSIA
HISTORY: COMBAT INSTRUCTOR



MY PAST: I was born in Moscow, which at the time was the capital of the Soviet Union. My family lived in a large apartment building, and many of our neighbors worked together in the same factory. I remember their complaining that I was a very active child and predicting that I would either die an early death or end up at the police station. In fact, by age ten, I was already on file with the police.

When I turned 18, I was conscripted into the army and served as a border guard. I returned home after two years and worked in a factory, but the job bored me. So I joined the Moscow police riot squad and worked as an instructor in hand-to-hand combat. I helped round up criminals in Moscow and traveled to various hot spots around the country. The tension inside me was like a coiled spring. When I returned home, I sometimes had to rest apart from my wife—I feared that I would injure her in my sleep.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: When I began studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses, I discovered that the violent lifestyle I led was not compatible with Bible standards. I also saw the need to stop smoking and to control the amount of alcohol I drank. However, I reasoned that I couldn’t change

my job, since I had no other skills that could provide me with the work I needed to feed my family. I also felt that I could never go preaching, as the Witnesses did.

Eventually, I became convinced that the Bible record was accurate. And I drew comfort from the account at Ezekiel 18:21, 22. That passage says: “As regards someone wicked, in case he should turn back from all his sins that he has committed . . . , all his transgressions that he has committed—they will

not be remembered against him.”

I liked that the Witnesses didn’t tell me what to believe but helped me to reason on what I was learning. I took a stack of 40 or more of their magazines and read them within three weeks. What I learned convinced me that I had found the true religion.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: Before studying the Bible, my wife and I were on the brink of divorce. Now our marriage has improved. My wife began studying the Bible when I did, and we decided to serve Jehovah together. Now my family life is happier. I was also able to find work that did not conflict with Bible principles.

When I first engaged in door-to-door preaching, I would become very tense—the feelings that I had before taking part in a raid would well up inside of me. Now I am confident that I can remain calm, even if someone tries to provoke me. Over time, I have learned to be patient with people. I regret that I wasted so much of my life, but I now feel that my life is truly worthwhile. I enjoy pouring the strength I have into serving Jehovah God and helping others.



DRAW CLOSE TO GOD

“Remember Me, O My God, for Good”

I THOUGHT that Jehovah, who knows me so well, could never love me or approve of me.” So wrote a faithful Christian woman who has struggled with a lack of self-worth. Have you ever been plagued with similar feelings, thinking that you do not merit God’s attention, let alone have his approval? If so, the words recorded at Nehemiah 13:31 may be of encouragement to you.

Nehemiah, governor of the Jews in the fifth century B.C.E., did his best to please God. He spearheaded the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s walls despite enemy opposition. He enforced God’s Law, cared for the oppressed, and sought to build up the faith of his fellow Israelites. Did God notice the good that this faithful man had done? Did Nehemiah have Jehovah’s approval? We can discern the answers in the closing words of the book that bears his name.

Nehemiah prays: “Do remember me, O my God, for good.”* Is Nehemiah afraid that his good deeds have gone unnoticed by God or that God will forget about him? No. Nehemiah is no doubt aware of what earlier Bible writers have said about Jehovah’s keen interest in his faithful worshippers and their good deeds. (Exodus 32:32, 33; Psalm 56:8) What, then, is he asking God to do? One reference work notes that the Hebrew term translated “remember” implies “the affection of the mind and the action which accompanies recollection.” With full faith in the power of prayer, Nehemiah is ask-

ing God to remember him with affection and to bless him.—Nehemiah 2:4.

Will Jehovah answer Nehemiah’s prayer for remembrance? In one respect, he already has. The very fact that Jehovah saw fit to have a permanent record made of Nehemiah’s prayer, making it part of the inspired Scriptures, assures us that he remembers Nehemiah with affection. But the “Hearer of prayer” will do more to answer Nehemiah’s heartfelt request.—Psalm 65:2.

God will yet reward Nehemiah for all the good that he did for pure worship. (Hebrews 11:6) In the coming righteous new world that Jehovah has promised, he will bless Nehemiah by resurrecting him from the dead.* (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4) There, with the prospect of everlasting life on a paradise earth, Nehemiah will see that Jehovah has, indeed, remembered him for good.

Nehemiah’s prayer attests to the truthfulness of King David’s words: “You yourself will bless anyone righteous, O Jehovah; as with a large shield, with approval you will surround them.” (Psalm 5:12) Yes, God notices and values our sincere efforts to please him. As long as you do your best to serve him, you can be confident that he will remember you with affection and will richly bless you.

* For more information about God’s purpose for faithful humans on earth, see chapters 3 and 7 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

* This is the last of four occurrences in this Bible book where Nehemiah prays to God for a good or favorable outcome for his faithful deeds.—Nehemiah 5:19; 13:14, 22, 31.

SUGGESTED BIBLE READING FOR FEBRUARY:

■ **Nehemiah 1-13**



DID YOU KNOW?

What was the custom of gleaning, and who benefited from it?



■ The Mosaic Law prohibited farmers from stripping their land of all of its produce. Instead, those who harvested grain were not to reap the edges of the fields completely. Those who gathered grapes were not to pick up those that were scattered or go back again to harvest those that were immature the first time. And those who beat the boughs of the olive trees were to leave the fruit that did not fall. (Leviticus 19:9, 10; Deuteronomy 24:19-21) The poor, the orphans, the widows, and the alien residents could then glean—or pick up—the leftovers of the harvest.

This law regarding gleaning benefited all Israelite society. In the landowner, it encouraged generosity, unselfishness, and reliance on God's blessings. In those who gleaned, it promoted industriousness, for gleaning was hard work. (Ruth 2:2-17) Gleaning ensured that the poor would not go hungry or become a burden on the community. It also spared them the indignity of having to beg or having to rely on handouts.

Why did Solomon import timber all the way from Lebanon for the construction of the temple in Jerusalem?



TRANSPORT OF
LEBANESE CEDAR,
ASSYRIAN RELIEF
FROM THE PALACE
OF SARGON

Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY

■ The account at 1 Kings 5:1-10 describes an agreement made between Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre. According to that agreement, rafts of cedar and juniper logs were to be brought to Israel by sea from Lebanon and used in the construction of the temple.

Cedar was an important trade item in the ancient Middle East. In Egypt and Mesopotamia, this timber was regularly used for the beams and paneling of temples and palaces. Royal archives, literary texts, and inscriptions attest to the continual importation of cedar to various southern Mesopotamian city-states, sometimes as booty or

tribute. In Egypt it was used in the construction of royal barges, coffins, and other funerary items.

The cedars of Lebanon were particularly renowned for the durability, beauty, and sweet fragrance of their wood, not to mention their resistance to attack by insects. Thus, Solomon was using the best of materials for the temple. Today, all that remains of the forests of cedars that once covered the Lebanese mountains are a few small, isolated groves.



LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

Who Is God?

This article raises questions you may have asked and shows where you can read the answers in your Bible. Jehovah's Witnesses would be pleased to discuss these answers with you.

1. Who is God?

The true God is the Creator of all things. The Bible calls him the "King of eternity," meaning that he had no beginning and will never have an end. (Revelation 15:3) Since God is the Source of life, we should worship only him.—*Read Revelation 4:11.*



2. What is God like?

No one has ever seen God because he is a Spirit, which means that he is a higher form of life than the physical creatures who live on earth. (John 1:18; 4:24) God's personality is revealed in the things he has made. For example, when we contemplate the design and variety of fruits and flowers, we discern God's

love and wisdom. The vastness of the universe tells us of God's power.—*Read Romans 1:20.*

We can learn even more about God's personality from the Bible. For example, it tells us what God likes and what he does not like, how he treats people, and how he reacts in different situations.—*Read Psalm 103:7-10.*

3. Does God have a name?

Jesus said: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified." (Matthew 6:9) Although God has many titles, he has only one name. In each language, it is pronounced differently. In English we usually say "Jehovah" or sometimes "Yahweh."—*Read Psalm 83:18.*

God's name has been taken out of many Bibles and replaced with the titles Lord or God. But when the Bible was written, it contained God's name some 7,000 times. Jesus made God's name known by using it when he explained God's Word to people. He helped people to come to know God.—*Read John 17:26.*

4. Does Jehovah care about us?

Jehovah shows interest in us by listening personally to our prayers. (Psalm 65:2) Does the abundance of suffering mean that God does not care about us? Some people claim that God makes us suffer to test us, but this is not true. The Bible says: “Far be it from the true God to act wickedly.”—Job 34:10; *read James 1:13.*

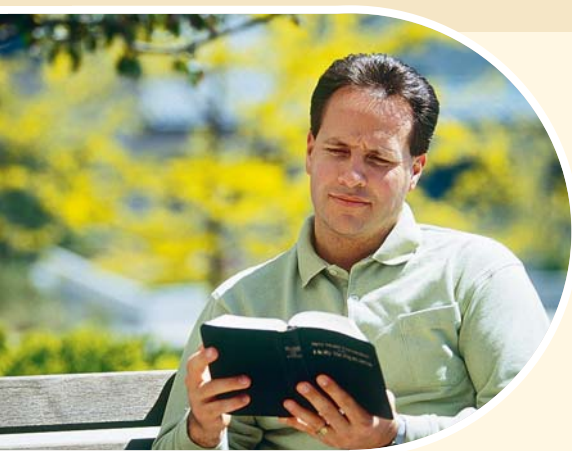
God has granted man the dignity of free will. Do we not appreciate our freedom to choose to serve God? (Joshua 24:15) Suffering abounds because many choose to do bad things to others. It hurts Jehovah to see such injustice.—*Read Genesis 6:5, 6.*

Soon, Jehovah will use Jesus to eliminate suffering and those who cause it. Meanwhile, Jehovah has good reason for allowing suffer-



Can there be a good reason for allowing suffering temporarily?

ing temporarily. A later lesson in this series will explain why God allows suffering.—*Read Isaiah 11:4.*

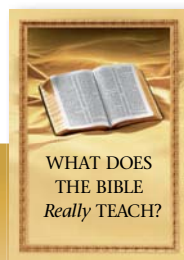


5. What does God want us to do?

Jehovah created us with the ability to come to know and love him. He wants us to learn the truth about him. (1 Timothy 2:4) If we study the Bible, we can come to know God as a Friend.—*Read Proverbs 2:4, 5.*

Since Jehovah has given us life, we should love him more than we love anyone else. We can show God that we love him by speaking to him in prayer and by doing as he asks. (Proverbs 15:8) Jehovah asks us to treat other people with love.—*Read Mark 12:29, 30; 1 John 5:3.*

For more information, see chapter 1 of this book, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.





KEYS TO FAMILY HAPPINESS

Inculcate Moral Values in Your Children

Loida,* a mother in Mexico, says: “Condoms are given out at school, so teenagers think having sex is all right—as long as it’s ‘safe’ sex.”

Nobuko, a mother in Japan, says: “I asked my son what he would do if he and his girlfriend were alone. His reply was, ‘I don’t know.’”

WHEN your son or daughter was a toddler, did you childproof your home? Perhaps you covered electrical outlets, hid sharp objects, and barricaded stairways—all in an effort to keep your child safe.

If only it were that easy to keep your teenager safe! Now you have greater worries, such as: ‘Is my son accessing pornography?’ ‘Is my daughter ‘sexting’—sending lewd photos of herself via cell phone?’ And the dreaded question, ‘Is my teenager sexually active?’

The Illusion of Control

Some parents try to maintain 24-hour surveillance over their teens by hovering over them and monitoring their every move. Later, many of them discover that such ‘helicopter parenting’ only drove their teen underground. Their son or daughter became adept at hiding the very conduct the parents were trying to prevent.

Clearly, control is not the answer. Jehovah God himself does not use that method to elicit obedience from his creatures, and neither

* Some names in this article have been changed.



should you as a parent. (Deuteronomy 30:19) So how *can* you help your teens make wise moral decisions?—Proverbs 27:11.

A basic measure is to have ongoing discussions with your children and to start when they are young.* (Proverbs 22:6) Then, when they enter adolescence, *keep talking*. As a parent, you should be your teenager’s primary source of reliable information. “A lot of people think that we’d rather talk to our friends about sex,” says Alicia, a girl from Britain,

* For suggestions on how to initiate a discussion with your children about sex and how to share age-appropriate information, see *The Watchtower*, November 1, 2010, pages 12-14.

“but that’s not true. We appreciate this information when it comes from our parents. We trust what they have to say.”

The Need for Good Values

As they grow, children need to know more about sex than just the facts of life. They should also have “their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Hebrews 5:14) In short, they need values—a moral code made up of strongly held beliefs about sex—along with conduct that conforms to those beliefs. How can you inculcate good values in your teenager?

Start by considering your own values. For example, you may strongly believe that fornication—sex between unmarried individuals—is wrong. (1 Thessalonians 4:3) Likely, your children know your position on the matter; they may even be able to quote Bible passages that back up your beliefs. When questioned, they may readily answer that premarital sex is wrong.

But more is needed. The book *Sex Smart* observes that some youths may outwardly agree with their parents’ beliefs about sex. The book states: “They feel too uncertain to form their own opinions. When they stumble into an unexpected situation and face an immediate dilemma about ‘how far to go,’ they find themselves mixed up and in real trouble.” This is precisely why values are essential. How can you help your teen acquire them?

Make your values clear. Do you believe that sex should be reserved for marriage? Then tell your teen, clearly and often. According to the book *Beyond the Big Talk*, research reveals that “in homes where parents have given their teen children clear messages that indicate that they disapprove of teens having intercourse, these teens are more likely to delay becoming involved in sexual intercourse.”

Of course, as mentioned earlier, simply stating your values does not guarantee that

your son or daughter will choose to live by them. However, solid family values will provide a foundation upon which children can build their own. And studies have found that many youths do eventually adopt their parents’ values even if during the teen years the children seem to have put them in storage.

TRY THIS: Use a news event to initiate a discussion and communicate your values. For example, if a sex crime is reported, you might say: “I’m appalled at the way some men try to take advantage of women. Where do you think they get such ideas?”

Teach the whole truth about sex.

Warnings are necessary. (1 Corinthians 6:18; James 1:14, 15) However, the Bible primarily portrays sex as a gift of God, not as a trap of Satan. (Proverbs 5:18, 19; Song of Solomon 1:2) Telling your teens *only* about the dangers may leave them with a distorted, unscriptural view of the topic. “My parents put a lot of emphasis on sexual immorality,” says a young woman in France named Corrina, “and that gave me a negative attitude toward sex relations.”

Make sure that your children get the whole truth about sex. “What I have always tried to get across to my teens,” says a mother in Mexico named Nadia, “is that sex is beautiful and natural and that Jehovah God gave it to humans for them to enjoy. But it has its proper place within marriage. It can give us happiness or suffering, depending on how we use it.”

TRY THIS: The next time you talk to your teen about sex, end the discussion on a positive note. Do not be afraid to portray sex as a wonderful gift from God that he or she can enjoy in the future as a married person. Convey confidence that until that time your teen can adhere to God’s standards.

Help your teen to evaluate the consequences. To make good decisions in any aspect of life, teenagers need to know how to identify options and then weigh the pros and cons of each option. Do not think that their simply knowing what is right and what is wrong is enough. “Reflecting on the mistakes of my youth,” says a Christian woman in Australia named Emma, “I can say that just knowing God’s standards doesn’t mean you agree with them. Understanding the benefits of those standards—and the consequences of violating them—is vital.”

The Bible can help, for many of its commands are reinforced by phrases that set forth the consequences of wrongdoing. For example, Proverbs 5:8, 9 urges young men to shun fornication *“that you may not give to others your dignity.”* As those verses indicate, those who engage in premarital sex sacrifice a degree of their character, integrity, and self-respect. And that makes them far less attractive to any potential mate who has those qualities. Reflecting on the physical, emotional, and spiritual dangers of disregarding God’s laws can bolster your teen’s resolve to live by them.*

* For more information, see the article “Young People Ask . . . Will Sex Improve Our Relationship?” in the April 2010 issue of *Awake!* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

The Bible Has Stood the Test of Time

“The instruction related to sexual behavior in the Bible has stood the test of time. In a day when an increasing number of young teens are reaping the serious emotional consequences of premature sexual activity, out of wedlock pregnancies, and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, the Scriptures’ advice to save sex for marriage . . . is extremely relevant, the only ‘safe sex,’ and effective.”—*Parenting Teens With Love and Logic*.

TRY THIS: Use illustrations to help your teen see the wisdom of God’s standards. For example, you might say: “A campfire is good; a forest fire is bad. What is the difference between the two, and how does your answer apply to the boundaries God has set regarding sex?” Use the account at Proverbs 5:3-14 to help your teen understand the harmful consequences of fornication.

Takao, an 18-year-old in Japan, states, “I know that I should do what is right, but there is this ongoing struggle against the desires of the flesh.” Youths who feel that way can be comforted by the fact that they are not alone. Even the apostle Paul—a stalwart Christian—admitted: “When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me.” —Romans 7:21.

Teenagers would do well to realize that such a struggle is not always bad. It can prompt them to contemplate just what sort of person they want to become. It can help them to come to grips with the question, ‘Do I want to take charge of my life and be known as someone who has character and integrity, or do I want to be known as a follower—a person who weakly caves in to his desires?’ Having good moral values will help your teen answer that question wisely.

ASK YOURSELF . . .

- *What indications do I have that my teenager has strong moral values?*
- *When talking to my teenager about sex, do I portray it primarily as a gift of God or as a trap of Satan?*



ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE Most Important Day of the Year?

JUST a few hours before he died, Jesus instituted a special way to commemorate his death. This observance became known as “the Lord’s evening meal,” or “the Lord’s supper.” (1 Corinthians 11:20; *English Standard Version*) Showing the importance of the occasion, Jesus commanded: “Do this in memory of me.” (Luke 22:19, *The Bible in Basic English*) Do you desire to obey Jesus? If so, then you will view the anniversary of Jesus’ death as the most important day of the year.

But when exactly should you commemorate this event? And how can you make sure that you are fully prepared to understand the significance of this important occasion? These are questions that each Christian should carefully consider.

How Often?

We usually remember important events annually. For example, although the tragic events of September 11, 2001, are constantly on the minds of those in New York City who lost loved ones when the World Trade Center was attacked, when that date comes around

each year, it holds special significance for them.

Likewise, in Bible times important events were remembered annually. (Esther 9:21, 27) Jehovah commanded the Israelites to celebrate their miraculous release from slavery in Egypt annually. The Bible refers to that celebration as the Passover, and the Israelites observed the event once a year on the actual date that they were saved.—Exodus 12:24-27; 13:10.

Jesus had just finished celebrating the Passover with his apostles when he instituted the special meal that would become the model for memorializing his death. (Luke 22:7-20) The Passover was celebrated annually. Therefore, we can conclude that this new observance that replaced the Passover should likewise be held once a year. But on what date?

When?

To answer that question, we need to understand two things. First, in Bible times a new day began in the evening, at sunset, and ended the next day at sunset. A day, therefore, ran from evening to evening.—Leviticus 23:32.

Second, the Bible does not use the calendar that we use today. Rather than using months with such names as March and April, the Bible speaks of such months as Adar and Nisan. (Esther 3:7) The Jews counted their months from new moon to new moon. They celebrated the Passover on the 14th day of the first month of their calendar, Nisan. (Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 28:16) That day, Nisan 14, was the same date that the Romans impaled our Lord Jesus Christ. He died 1,545 years after the first Passover meal was celebrated. What a special date Nisan 14 is!

But what date corresponds to Nisan 14 on our calendar today? A simple calculation helps us arrive at the proper date. Nisan 1 starts when the new moon nearest the spring equinox (the start of spring in the Northern Hemisphere) becomes visible at sunset in Jerusalem. If we count 14 days from that event, we arrive at Nisan 14. This date is usually the day of the full moon. Using this Biblical method, Nisan 14 this year begins at sunset on Sunday, April 17, 2011.*

This year, Jehovah's Witnesses are therefore preparing to gather together with all those who wish to remember Jesus' death. They cordially invite you to associate with them. Please contact Jehovah's Witnesses locally to find out the time and location of this gathering. They will be commemorating this event, not in the morning or in the afternoon, but in the evening after sunset. Why? Because according to the Bible, this is to be an "evening meal." (1 Corinthians 11:25) The evening of Sunday, April 17, 2011, is the anniversary of the evening that Jesus started this special commemoration 1,978 years ago. It is

* This date may not coincide with that of the Passover kept by modern-day Jews. Why not? Most Jews today keep the Passover on Nisan 15, believing that the command at Exodus 12:6 points to that date. (See *The Watchtower* of February 15, 1990, page 14.) But Jesus celebrated it on Nisan 14 in harmony with what was stated in the Mosaic Law. For more information on how to calculate this date, see *The Watchtower* of June 15, 1977, pages 383-384.



also the start of the same day, Nisan 14, that Jesus died. What better day could there be to remember his death?

How to Prepare

What can you do now to prepare for this once-a-year occasion? One way is to meditate on what Jesus has done for us. The book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?** has helped millions to enhance their appreciation for the meaning of Jesus' death.—Matthew 20:28.

Another way to prepare our hearts for this special occasion is to read about the events leading up to the last day of Jesus' life here on earth. On the following pages, you will find a chart. The column on the right provides a list of parallel Bible accounts that describe the events prior to Jesus' death. Included also in this listing are the chapters from the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*# that explain the events.

The column on the left compares the dates of those events with the days they correspond to this year. Why not take time to read at least some of the passages of Scripture on each of the days leading up to the Lord's Evening Meal? It will help you to prepare for the most important day of the year.

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses. See pages 47-56, 206-208. You can access this publication through the Web site www.watchtower.org.

Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

THE FINAL WEEK

2011 Tues. April 12

2012
2013

■ Sabbath

■ Matthew
■ Mark
■ Luke
■ John 11:55–12:1
■ gf 101, pars. 2-4*

*The numbers listed here refer to chapters in the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived* (gf). For a chart containing the detailed Scriptural references for Jesus' final ministry, see "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial," page 290, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

NISAN 9 (begins at sunset)

In Bible times the new day began in the evening, after sunset, and ended the next day at sunset

- Feast with Simon the leper
- Mary anoints with nard
- Jews come to visit Jesus and Lazarus

■ Matthew 26:6-13
■ Mark 14:3-9
■ Luke
■ John 12:2-11
■ gf 101, pars. 5-9



2011 Wed. April 13

2012
2013

- Triumphant entry into Jerusalem
- Teaches in temple

■ Matthew 21:1-11, 14-17
■ Mark 11:1-11
■ Luke 19:29-44
■ John 12:12-19
■ gf 102



NISAN 10 (begins at sunset)

- Spends night in Bethany

2011 Thurs. April 14
2012
2013

- Early trip into Jerusalem
- Cleanses temple
- Jehovah speaks from heaven

■ Matthew 21:12-13, 18, 19
■ Mark 11:12-19
■ Luke 19:45-48
■ John 12:20-50
■ gf 103, 104



NISAN 11 (begins at sunset)

2011 Fri. April 15

2012
2013

- Teaches at temple, using illustrations
- Condemns Pharisees
- Notes widow's contribution
- Predicts Jerusalem's fall
- Gives sign of future presence

■ Matthew 21:19-25:46
■ Mark 11:20-13:37
■ Luke 20:1-21:38
■ John
■ gf 105 to 112, par. 1



NISAN 12 (begins at sunset)

2011 Sat. April 16

2012
2013

- Quiet day with disciples in Bethany
- Judas arranges betrayal

■ Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16
■ Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11
■ Luke 22:1-6
■ John
■ gf 112, pars. 2-4



CHART CONTINUES ON OTHER SIDE



NISAN 13

(begins at sunset)

2011 Sun. April 17

2012
2013

- Peter and John prepare for Passover
- Jesus and other ten apostles follow in late afternoon

<input type="checkbox"/>	Matthew 26:17-19
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark 14:12-16
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luke 22:7-13
<input type="checkbox"/>	John
<input type="checkbox"/>	gt 112, par. 5 to 113, par. 1



NISAN 14

(begins at sunset)

- Celebrates Passover
- Washes feet of apostles
- Dismisses Judas
- Institutes Memorial of his death

<input type="checkbox"/>	Matthew 26:20-35
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark 14:17-31
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luke 22:14-38
<input type="checkbox"/>	John 13:1-17:26
<input type="checkbox"/>	gt 113, par. 2 to the end of 116



midnight

2011 Mon. April 18

2012
2013

- Betrayed and arrested in garden of Gethsemane
- Apostles flee
- Tried by Sanhedrin
- Peter denies Jesus

<input type="checkbox"/>	Matthew 26:36-75
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark 14:32-72
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luke 22:39-62
<input type="checkbox"/>	John 18:1-27
<input type="checkbox"/>	gt 117 to the end of 120



- Stands before Sanhedrin again
- Taken to Pilate, then Herod, then back to Pilate
- Sentenced to death and impaled
- Dies about three o'clock in the afternoon
- Body removed and buried

<input type="checkbox"/>	Matthew 27:1-61
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark 15:1-47
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luke 22:63-23:56
<input type="checkbox"/>	John 18:28-19:42
<input type="checkbox"/>	gt 121 to 127, par. 7



- Sabbath

NISAN 15

(begins at sunset)

2011 Tues. April 19

2012
2013

- Pilate approves posting guards at Jesus' grave

<input type="checkbox"/>	Matthew 27:62-66
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luke
<input type="checkbox"/>	John
<input type="checkbox"/>	gt 127, pars. 8-9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark 16:1



NISAN 16

(begins at sunset)

2011 Wed. April 20

2012
2013

- Resurrected
- Appears to disciples

<input type="checkbox"/>	Matthew 28:1-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark 16:2-8
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luke 24:1-49
<input type="checkbox"/>	John 20:1-25
<input type="checkbox"/>	gt 127, par. 10 to 129, par. 10





TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

She Was Loved by God and by Her Friends

NOBODY today knows her name. She is known now only by the name of her father, Jephthah. Let's look into the Bible and learn about the two of them. We will find that Jephthah's daughter was loved both by God and by her friends.

We can read about Jephthah and his daughter in the Bible in Judges chapter 11. Since Jephthah was a faithful servant of God, he no doubt regularly discussed the Scriptures with his daughter.

Jephthah lived before God's people, the Israelites, had asked for a human king to rule over them. Jephthah was a strong man with the ability to fight. So the Israelites asked him to lead them against the Ammonites, a neighbor nation that had been fighting the Israelites.

Jephthah wanted God's help to defeat the Ammonites, so he made a promise. Jephthah said that if Jehovah gave him the victory, he would give to Jehovah the first one who came out of his house when he returned home. That person would serve for the rest of his or her life at God's tabernacle—the place where the people worshipped God in those days.

Do you know who came out first?—*

* If you are reading with a child, the dash provides a reminder to pause and encourage the child to express himself.

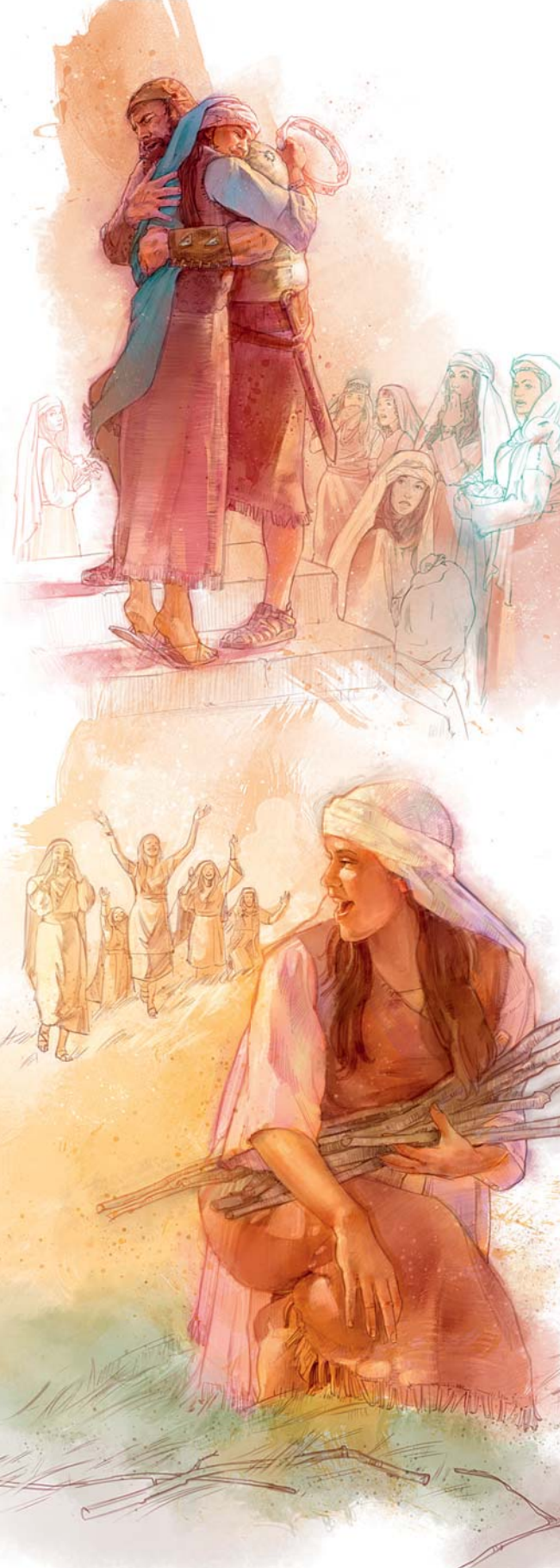


Yes, Jephthah's daughter! Jephthah was very sad. He had only one child. But he had made a promise to Jehovah and had to keep it. Right away, his daughter said: "My father, if you have opened your mouth to Jehovah, do to me according to what has gone forth from your mouth." Then she asked to be left alone for two months so that she could go into the mountains to weep. Why the sadness? Because by keeping her father's vow, she would be giving up the right to marry and have children. Even so, she did not view her own desires as the most important thing. She wanted to obey her father and to be loyal to Jehovah. ***Do you think that she made Jehovah and her father happy?***—

So Jephthah sent his daughter away for two months with her girl companions. When she returned, her father carried out his vow by sending her to God's tabernacle at Shiloh for the rest of her life. Every year, the young women of Israel would go to Shiloh and encourage Jephthah's daughter.

Do you know young ones who obey their parents and love Jehovah?— It is good to get to know those children better and to become their friend. If you imitate Jephthah's daughter and are obedient and loyal, you will have good friends. You will make your parents happy, and Jehovah will love you too.

READ IN YOUR BIBLE
Deuteronomy 6:4-6
Judges 11:30-40
1 Corinthians 7:37, 38





OUR READERS ASK . . .

Do Jehovah's Witnesses accept medical treatment?

■ Jesus said that “persons in health do not need a physician, but the ailing do.” (Matthew 9:12) He thereby implied that there is no Scriptural objection to getting help from medical professionals. Thus, Jehovah’s Witnesses gladly accept medicine and medical treatment. They want to maintain good health and to prolong life. In fact, like the first-century Christian Luke, some of Jehovah’s Witnesses are physicians.—Colossians 4:14.

However, Jehovah’s Witnesses do not accept types of treatment that conflict with Bible principles. For example, they do not accept blood transfusions because the Bible forbids the taking of blood to sustain the body. (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:1-14; Acts 15:28, 29) God’s Word also prohibits health treatments or procedures that involve the use of “uncanny power,” or spiritism.—Isaiah 1:13; Galatians 5:19-21.

Many health-care professionals provide life-saving treatments that do not conflict with Bible standards. Such treatments, which many Witnesses choose to accept, are often of a better quality than those that ignore what God requires.

Of course, there are many opinions when it comes to matters of health. What may benefit one person might not help another. Thus, individuals searching for an accurate professional diagnosis and treatment of an illness may wish to get a second medical opinion.—Proverbs 14:15.

Not every Witness will make the same medical choices. Where no Bible law is at stake, God’s Word allows for differences of conscience among Christians. (Romans 14:2-4) Each individual, therefore, should investigate any proposed treatment and ensure that it does not

conflict with his or her Bible-trained conscience. —Galatians 6:5; Hebrews 5:14.

A Witness will view the making of each decision as if he were a driver approaching a busy intersection. If he just followed the cars ahead and sped through the intersection, he could cause serious damage. A wise driver will slow down and evaluate the flow of traffic before proceeding. Likewise, Witnesses do not rush into making medical decisions, nor do they blindly follow popular opinion. Instead, they weigh their options and examine Bible principles before making a decision.

Jehovah’s Witnesses certainly appreciate the hard work and dedication of those who provide medical care. They are also grateful for the welcome relief from illness that those individuals provide.



"This Is Your Day"

ON September 11, 2010, nearly 8,000 gathered for a special event—the graduation of the 129th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. "This is your day," Samuel Herd of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses told the students. "We are here to rejoice with you!"

"The Hearing Ear"

Brother Herd began the program by discussing the need for all Christians to make good use of "the hearing ear" by paying attention to God's Word. (Proverbs 20:12) "You have lent your ears to Jehovah for the past few months," Brother Herd told the class, "and you will continue to do so into eternity."

How can new missionaries use their ears wisely? "By tuning in to the Word of God," Brother Herd stated. He added: "Much will be said during today's program that will prepare you for your work as missionaries in the years ahead."

"Trust in Jehovah With Your Whole Heart"

Gerrit Lösch, a member of the Governing Body, spoke to the students on this thought-provoking theme. He recounted numerous occasions on which God's people, both ancient and modern, have displayed trust in Jehovah.

In a similar way, "missionaries need to show trust regarding their assignments," Brother Lösch pointed out. "For example," he said, "you may wonder: 'Will I be able to learn the new language? Will I be able to adjust to a new culture? Will I be able to combat

homesickness?'" The answer? Brother Lösch exhorted the class to "trust in Jehovah."

Brother Lösch also read Proverbs 14:26, which states: "In the fear of Jehovah there is *strong confidence*." Our trust in Jehovah will grow if we reflect on the many ways in which he has blessed us.

The Bible says that the person who trusts in Jehovah "will certainly become like a tree planted by the waters, that sends out its roots right by the watercourse; and he will not see when heat comes, but his foliage will actually prove to be luxuriant."—Jeremiah 17:7, 8.

The lesson is clear. "No matter what lies ahead," Brother Lösch said, "your trust needs to be in Jehovah."

"Imitate the Faithful Angels"

That was the subject of a talk by Governing Body member Stephen Lett. The angels provide a wonderful example for us. "Everything the Bible reveals about them is worthy of imitation," Brother Lett said. He then identified four traits of the faithful angels that we would do well to imitate—their endurance, their humility, their helpfulness, and their integrity.

The Bible reports that one angel resisted 'the prince of Persia'—a powerful demon—for 21 days. (Daniel 10:13) That angel displayed *endurance*. Christians too "have a

"When someone tries to praise you . . . , direct attention away from yourself"

wrestling . . . against the wicked spirit forces,” Brother Lett pointed out. (Ephesians 6:12) “Fight hard to continue carrying out your assignment,” he told the students.

When Manoah, the father of Samson, asked an angel for his name, the angel refused to give it. That angel displayed *humility*. (Judges 13:17, 18) Brother Lett told the students: “When someone tries to praise you or rave about your abilities, humbly direct attention away from yourself and toward Jehovah and his organization.”—1 Corinthians 4:7.

When Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane shortly before his death, “an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.” (Luke 22:43) That angel showed *helpfulness*. “Prayerfully try to determine what the real needs are in your missionary assignment,” Brother Lett said, “and then with Jehovah’s help, try to fill those needs.”

Since only a minority of angels joined Satan in his rebellion, we can say that the vast majority of these heavenly creatures are marvelous examples of *integrity*.—Revelation 12:4.

“Like those faithful angels, resist the Devil,” Brother Lett urged the students. “Oppose him, and he will flee.”—James 4:7.

Three Other Program Highlights

“Keep Jehovah as the Rock of Your Heart.”

Speaking on that captivating topic, based on Psalm 73:26, Gary Breaux, a member of the United States Branch Committee, helped the students to appreciate the need for relying on Jehovah. In what sense is Jehovah like a rock? “A rock can hold down a piece of paper in a windstorm,” Brother Breaux stated. “In a similar way, Jehovah can be a stabilizing influence that can guard your heart.” Of course, the heart can mislead us when we are faced with tests of endurance. (Jeremiah

17:9) A new climate, new foods, new companions in a missionary home—any of these could cause one to consider quitting. “You will face situations in which you will have to consider options and make decisions,” Brother Breaux stated. “Will you choose a course that Jehovah will be pleased with? If you do, Jehovah will become ‘the rock of your heart.’ He will direct your steps.”

“Do You Have Enough Faith to Get Your Feet Wet?” Gilead instructor Sam Roberson developed that theme, basing it on Joshua chapter 3. How could millions of Israelites cross the Jordan River when it was at flood stage? Jehovah told Joshua to command the

“There will be ‘Jordans’
in your life”

priests to “stand still *in the Jordan*.” God promised: “At the instant that the soles of the feet of the priests . . . rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, . . . and they will stand still as one dam.” (Joshua 3:8, 13) Brother Roberson told the students: “There will be ‘Jordans’ in your life that will separate you from your blessings if you allow them to.” For example, there may be challenges in getting along with fellow missionaries. The solution? “Look at the work; don’t look at the workers.” Brother Roberson exhorted the class: “If you display the faith to get your feet wet, Jehovah will help you cross those ‘Jordans’ of your missionary life.”

“Firmly Establish Your Plans.” That was the subject developed by Gilead instructor William Samuelson. His talk was based on Proverbs 16:3, which states: “Roll your works upon Jehovah himself and your plans will be firmly established.” Brother Samuelson



Gilead students reenact one of their preaching experiences

asked the students: “Does this verse mean that you have no part in establishing your plans other than ‘rolling your works’ upon Jehovah?” No, he said, for Proverbs 16:1 states: “To earthling man belong the arrangements of the heart.” Brother Samuelson said: “Jehovah does not miraculously arrange your heart for you. Rather, you need to be sure that you are motivated in the right direction. By study, prayer, and close ties to the local branch office, you will continue to have a heart that will serve you well, and Jehovah himself will firmly establish your plans.”

Experiences and Interviews

As part of their training, Gilead students join local congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the public preaching work. Mark Noumair, another of the Gilead instructors, interviewed a number of students regarding their experiences. Especially highlighted in the experiences was the role of prayer in locating honesthearted ones in the territory.

For instance, one couple were at a fast-food restaurant. An employee noticed that they were offering a silent prayer. He approached and asked if they were Jehovah’s Witnesses. Upon finding out that they were, the employee explained that he was raised as a Witness but had fallen away from the faith. He had even committed a crime and had been sent to prison. Now this young man felt that he wanted Jehovah back in his life. He also said that before the couple entered the restaurant, he was praying to God, expressing his desire for help to straighten out his life. His prayer was answered!

Using the theme “Taste and See That Jehovah Is Good,” Rudi Hartl of the Writing Correspondence Department conducted interviews with Wayne Wridgway from Mozambique, Jason Reed from Chile, and Kenji Chichii from Nepal. All three are Gilead-trained missionaries. These brothers talked openly about some of the challenges they faced as new missionaries—whether learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, or dealing with homesickness. “One thing that helped us was to make friends in the new congregation as soon as possible,” stated Brother Chichii. “As we got closer to the congregation, we found it easier to cope with homesickness.”

Shortly after all 56 students received their diplomas, one graduate read a touching letter of appreciation from the class. In part, it stated to the Governing Body: “As a class, we have observed firsthand how you have lovingly and tirelessly given of yourselves, providing the curriculum, visiting the class, and giving us fine spiritual instruction. Because of being recipients of your love, we will do our utmost to imitate your fine examples of love, patience, humility, and personal interest when we arrive in our assignments.”



129th Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.

- (1) Munaretto, R.; Olofsson, Y.; Budden, K.; Najdzion, L.; Moya, G.; Treviño, G.; Dion, A.; Fleegle, A.
- (2) Smith, J.; Michael Raj, J.; Smith, S.; Paramo, A.; McDonald, J.; Deans, M.; Joyal, S.; Watson, L.
- (3) Joyal, C.; Crawley, T.; Hacker, D.; Shynkarenko, J.; Knapp, T.; Ayling, J.; Highley, C.; Olofsson, B.
- (4) Fitzpatrick, M.; Najdzion, B.; Skallerud, L.; Harris, A.; Harris, S.; Budden, R.; Paramo, Y.; Skallerud, K.
- (5) Crawley, B.; Michael Raj, J.; Lodge, A.; Lodge, R.; Herms, N.; Fitzpatrick, J.; Moya, R.; Munaretto, P.
- (6) Watson, S.; Deans, M.; Hacker, J.; McDonald, J.; Treviño, J.; Harris, S.; Herms, C.; Harris, P.
- (7) Shynkarenko, V.; Highley, T.; Smith, A.; Dion, J.; Ayling, R.; Smith, B.; Knapp, T.; Fleegle, B.

Class assigned to the **25** countries shown below



CLASS STATISTICS

- 9** countries represented
- 56** students
- 28** married couples
- 33.0** average age
- 17.9** average years since baptism
- 13.3** average years in the full-time ministry



MISSIONARY ASSIGNMENTS



What can a married couple do to grow closer? SEE PAGE 4.



Does God have a name? SEE PAGE 16.



Should parents try to teach their children good moral values? SEE PAGES 18-20.



What is “the Lord’s evening meal”? SEE PAGES 21-22.



Is it proper for Jesus’ followers to seek medical treatment? SEE PAGE 27.

Would you welcome a visit?