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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

IS GOD CRUEL?



THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, honors Jehovah God, the Ruler of the universe. It comforts people with the good news that God's heavenly Kingdom will soon end 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 continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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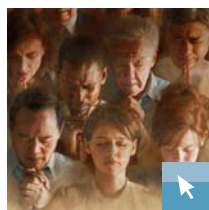
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Why Do People Say That God Is Cruel?

DO YOU find the question on the cover of this magazine shocking? Some do, but a lot of people today wonder whether God is cruel—or they assume that he is. Why?

Some who survive natural disasters ask: “Why does God allow these things to happen? Is he indifferent? Or is he cruel?”

Others are similarly troubled when reading the Bible. They come upon such accounts as the one about Noah and the Flood, and they wonder, ‘Why would a loving God put all those people to death? Is he cruel?’

Do such questions occur to you at times? Or do you find yourself unable to give an answer to those who wonder if God is cruel? In either case, consider a different question that may help.

WHY DO WE HATE CRUELTY?

Simply put, we hate cruelty because we have a sense of right and wrong. We differ greatly from animals in that respect. Our Creator made us “in his image.” (Genesis 1:27) What does that mean? He gave us the capacity to reflect his qualities and moral standards, his sense of right and wrong. Consider this: If we received our sense of right and wrong from God and we tend to hate cruelty, does that not suggest that God hates it too?

The Bible confirms such logic, for in the Bible, God assures us: “My ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:9) If we were to judge God to be cruel,



We are naturally inclined to show compassion and to hate cruelty

would we not be stating the opposite—in effect saying that our ways are higher than his? It would surely be wise to gather more facts before taking such a stand. Perhaps we should ask, not whether God is cruel, but why some of his actions may *appear* to be cruel. To help us, let us consider what “cruel” really means.

When we call someone cruel, we judge his motives. A cruel person is one who *enjoys* seeing others suffer or who is indifferent to their distress. Thus, a father who disciplines his son because he enjoys hurting his son’s feelings is cruel. But a father who disciplines his son to instruct or protect him is good. Motives are easily misunderstood, as you well know if anyone has ever misjudged you.

Let us consider two of the reasons why some think of God as cruel—the natural disasters we see today and the divine judgments we read about in the Bible. Do the facts really show that God is cruel?

Natural Disasters

EVIDENCE THAT GOD IS CRUEL?

WHAT YOU MAY HEAR: “God rules the world, so he causes natural disasters; therefore, he must be cruel.”

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: “The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) Who is “the wicked one”? The Bible identifies him as Satan. (Matthew 13:19; Mark 4:15) Is that far-fetched? Think of this: If Satan has power over the world, then he influences humans to be as selfish, greedy, and shortsighted as he is. Would that not help to explain why man so badly mismanages his own environment on the earth? Many experts warn that mismanagement of the environment may play a role in natural disasters, whether by causing them, worsening them, or making human society more vulnerable to them.

Then why does God allow Satan to have so much influence? The answer goes back to the dawn of human history, when our first parents rebelled against God as Ruler. Most of mankind has followed the same course ever since. That choice—the rejection of the rule of God—has placed the world of mankind in the hands of God’s enemy, Satan. Jesus thus called Satan “the ruler of the world.” (John 14:30) Will Satan rule forever? No!

Jehovah* is not callously indifferent to the suffering that Satan causes. In fact, God is deeply moved by human suffering. For example, concerning the hard times that befell the nation of Israel, the Bible says of God: “During all their distress it was distressing to him.” (Isaiah 63:9) Mercifully, God has arranged to bring the cruel rule of Satan to an end—soon! He has appointed his Son, Jesus Christ, to be a just and righteous King forever.

HOW YOU ARE INVOLVED: Although Satan’s rule has failed to protect people from natural disasters,



God gave his Son the power to end natural disasters

Jesus’ rule will do so. Jesus once acted to protect his disciples during a violent storm. The Bible account says: “He . . . rebuked the wind and said to the sea: ‘Hush! Be quiet!’ And the wind abated, and a great calm set in.” The disciples said: “Who really is this, because even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mark 4:37-41) That incident gives us confidence that Jesus will protect all obedient mankind during his rule as King.—Daniel 7: 13, 14.

* Jehovah is the name of God as revealed in the Bible.

Divine Judgments

WERE THEY CRUEL?

TO ADDRESS this question, let us briefly focus on two examples of divine judgment in the Bible—the Flood of Noah’s day and the extermination of the Canaanites.

THE FLOOD OF NOAH’S DAY

WHAT YOU MAY HEAR: “God was cruel when he unleashed a flood that destroyed all mankind except for Noah and his family.”

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: God said: “I take delight, not in the death of the wicked one, but in that someone wicked turns back from his way and actually keeps living.” (Ezekiel 33:11) So the destruction of the wicked in Noah’s day brought God no pleasure at all. Then why did he do it?

The Bible answers that when God brought such judgments against ungodly people in times past, he was “setting a pattern for ungodly persons of things to come.” (2 Peter 2:5, 6) What pattern did God set?

First, God established that even though it pains him to destroy people, he does take note of cruel people who cause suffering and holds them accountable for their actions. In time, he will end all injustice and suffering.

Second, the pattern of God’s past actions establishes that God lovingly warns people before executing judgment. Noah was a preacher of righteousness, but most people ignored him. The Bible says: “They took no note until the flood came and swept them all away.”—Matthew 24:39.

Has God held to that pattern? Yes. For example, he warned his people Israel that if they turned to wickedness as the nations around them had, he would allow enemies to invade their land; destroy their capital, Jerusalem; and carry them off into exile. Israel did turn to wickedness—even



Before God executed wicked people in the Deluge, he had Noah deliver a warning message

carrying out child sacrifice. Did Jehovah act? Yes, but only after sending prophets to warn his people, again and again, to change their ways before it was too late. He even said: “The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the prophets.”—Amos 3:7.

HOW YOU ARE INVOLVED: The pattern we see in Jehovah’s past judgments gives us hope. We can confidently look forward to God’s judgment

of those who cruelly cause suffering. The Bible says: “Evildoers themselves will be cut off . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.” (Psalm 37:9-11) What do you think about a judgment that relieves mankind of suffering? Is it cruel, or is it merciful?

THE EXTERMINATION OF THE CANAANITES

WHAT YOU MAY HEAR: “The destruction of the Canaanites was a cruel war crime comparable to modern-day genocides.”

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: “All [God’s] ways are justice. [He is] a God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice.” (Deuteronomy 32:4) An act of divine justice is not comparable to a human war. Why? Because unlike humans, God is able to read hearts—that is, what humans are on the inside.

For example, when God judged the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and determined to bring them to ruin, the faithful man Abraham was concerned about the justice of the matter. He could not imagine that his just God would “sweep away the righteous with the wicked.” Patiently, God reassured him that if there were even ten righteous people in Sodom, He would spare the city on their account. (Genesis 18:20-33) Clearly, God searched through the hearts of those people and saw the depth of their wickedness.—1 Chronicles 28:9.

Similarly, God judged the Canaanites and rightly ordered their destruction. The Canaanites were notorious for their cruelty, which included burning children alive in sacrificial fires.* (2 Kings 16:3) The Canaanites knew that Jehovah

had commanded Israel to take possession of all the land. Those who chose to remain and wage war were taking a deliberate stand against not only the Israelites but also Jehovah, who had given powerful evidence that he was with his people.

Moreover, God extended mercy to Canaanites who abandoned their wickedness and accepted Jehovah’s high moral standards. For example, the Canaanite prostitute Rahab was saved, along with her family. Also, when the inhabitants of the Canaanite city of Gibeon sought mercy, they and all their children were preserved alive.—Joshua 6:25; 9:3, 24-26.

HOW YOU ARE INVOLVED: We can learn a vital lesson from the judgment of the Canaanites. We are rapidly approaching the foretold “day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men.” (2 Peter 3:7) If we love Jehovah, we will benefit when he eliminates human suffering by ridding the earth of those who reject his just rule.

The Canaanites were notoriously cruel, and they deliberately opposed God and his people

Jehovah lovingly reminds us that the choices parents make affect their children. God’s Word says: “You must choose life in order that you may keep alive, you *and your offspring*, by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him.” (Deuteronomy 30:19, 20) Are those the words of a cruel God or the words of a God who loves people and wants them to make the right choice?

* Archaeologists have unearthed evidence that Canaanite worship included the sacrifice of babies.

Will You Trust God?

IMAGINE that you have a friend whom you admire greatly, but he does something that you cannot understand. Others criticize his action and judge his motives, saying that your friend is cruel. Would you be quick to agree with them, or would you wait to hear your friend's side of the story? If he was not there to explain himself, would you be patient, giving him the benefit of the doubt?

Before answering, you might want to know more. You might ask, 'How well do I really know this friend, and what basis do I have for admiring him?' Fair enough. But consider: Can we not apply the same principles to this question of whether God is cruel?

You may find it hard to understand some of what God has done, or you might be puzzled by what he has allowed to happen. There are plenty of people who will tell you that God is cruel and who will urge you to judge his motives as they have. Will you extend him the benefit of the doubt until you know more? The answer may depend on how well you know God. Ask yourself, 'What kind of a friend has God been to me?'

If your life has been difficult, you might be tempted to say that God has not been a friend at all. But think for a moment. Has God been responsible for the hardships in your life—or for the blessings? As we have seen, Satan is "the ruler of this world," not Jehovah. (John 12:31) It is thus Satan who is behind much of the misery and injustice of this world. And would you not agree that our own imperfections and unpredictable circumstances cause many of our problems?

On the other hand, what has God been responsible for? Consider what the Bible says: that God is "the Maker of heaven and earth"; that



Has God been responsible for the hardships in your life—or for the blessings?

his works include our physical bodies, which are "wonderfully made"; and that Jehovah is "the God in whose hand your breath is." (Psalm 124:8; 139:14; Daniel 5:23) What does all of that mean?

It means that we owe our every breath, our very existence, to our Creator. (Acts 17:28) It means that the gift of life, the beauty of the world around us, the pleasures of love and friendship, the joys of taste, touch, sound, and smell—all of these are gifts from God. (James 1:17) Would you not agree that those blessings make him a Friend who is worthy of our esteem and trust?

Granted, you may find it hard to trust God. Perhaps you feel that you do not yet know him well enough to trust him. And that is understandable. In these brief articles, we cannot address all the reasons why some judge God as cruel. But would it not be worth the effort to get to know God better? We are confident that as you do, you will come to know the truth about God. Is he cruel? Quite the opposite: "God is love."—1 John 4:8. ■

* For example, find more information on why God allows wickedness in chapter 11 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



AS TOLD BY ROBERTO PACHECO

YEAR BORN:

1957

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

MEXICO

HISTORY:

SEMINARY STUDENT;
VIOLENT TEMPER



“I dreamed of becoming a priest”

MY PAST: I was born in the small town of Texcoco. At the time, most of the streets were unpaved and dusty. It was common to see people from nearby villages bringing their donkeys to town loaded with things to sell. We were a very poor family of nine children, of which I was number seven. My father repaired *guaraches* (rustic sandals) to support the family. But he died when I was seven years old. From then on, my mother struggled to provide food for the family.

My grandfather played the violin and was the conductor of an orchestra that specialized in classical religious music. Almost all my family members played an instrument. My mother sang in the church choir, and my uncle was an opera singer and pianist. We were religiously inclined—I was an altar boy, and I dreamed of becoming a Catholic missionary. At the same time, I was a fan of karate movies. The more I watched those movies, the more I developed a violent nature.

As an altar boy, I dreamed of becoming a Catholic missionary, but I was also a fan of karate movies and developed a violent nature

I entered a religious school in Puebla that functioned like a seminary. My goal was to become a Catholic priest. But during my last year of studies, I became disillusioned with the Catholic Church. A young nun made sexual advances toward me. I resisted the temptation, but the situation awakened in me the desire to get married. Moreover, I observed that several priests were living a hypocritical lifestyle. Eventually, I abandoned my goal of becoming a priest.

I decided to study music at the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City. When I graduated, I got married, and my wife and I soon had four children. I provided for the family by singing Mass in the Catholic Church.

From the very beginning, our marriage was in trouble. My wife and I were violent toward each other, largely because we harbored feelings of jealousy. At first we attacked each other verbally, then physically. Finally, after 13 years, we decided to separate and later to divorce.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: My first contact with Jehovah's Witnesses came before I separated from my wife. Two Witnesses knocked on our door and offered to discuss the Bible. I thought that I knew a lot about religion, so I set out to prove them wrong. I posed difficult questions that I thought had no answer. But to my surprise, they always gave me good answers based on the Bible. I began to see how little I really knew. However, my wife was very rude to the Witnesses, and I was very busy, so the visits ended.

Five years later, I was living with another woman, Elvira, when I once again came in contact with Jehovah's Witnesses. Elvira didn't oppose the Witnesses, so I found it easier to study the Bible on a regular basis. Even so, it took me several years to break free from my past.

I realized that if I wanted to worship Jehovah wholeheartedly, I needed to make some big changes. First I had to quit my job singing Mass in the Catholic Church, which meant that I had to find another means of making a living. (Revelation 18:4) I also needed to legalize my marriage with Elvira.

One of the hardest changes, though, was to learn to control my explosive temper. Two Bible verses especially helped me: Psalm 11:5, which shows that Jehovah hates violence, and 1 Peter 3:7, which taught me that if I want Jehovah to

The Bible taught me that if I want Jehovah to hear my prayers, I must treat my wife with honor

hear my prayers, I must treat my wife with honor. As I meditated on those verses and prayed for Jehovah's help, I was gradually able to bring my temper under control.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: I now enjoy a happy family life. I am striving to repair my relationship with my sons from my first marriage and to help my present family to stay strong in the faith.

When I was a child, I dreamed of becoming a priest and helping people. Now I feel that my life has true meaning. I support my family by teaching music. I am so grateful that Jehovah was patient with me, giving me the opportunity to change and become a better person! ■





Dealing With Those Outside Your Stepfamily

MARGARET,* A STEPMOTHER IN AUSTRALIA: *“My husband’s ex-wife told the children not to listen to anything I said—even something as simple as ‘Remember to brush your teeth.’” Margaret feels that her marriage suffered as a result of that divisive tactic.*

Stepfamilies face unique and often challenging relationships with those outside their household.[#] Most stepparents must deal with the child’s other parent when it comes to such issues as visitation, discipline, and financial support. Friends and relatives too may struggle to adapt to new family members. Consider how ad-

vice from the Bible can help your stepfamily to meet those challenges.

RELATIONSHIP 1: THE CHILD’S OTHER PARENT

A stepmother in Namibia named Judith says: “My stepchildren’s mother once told them that I was just their father’s new wife and that any children we had would not be their siblings. Her words hurt me because I love my stepchildren as if they were my own.”

* Some names have been changed.

[#] For information on dealing with other challenges, see the cover series “Secrets of Successful Stepfamilies,” in the April 2012 issue of *Awake!* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Experts agree that the relationship with the child's other parent can become a tough, divisive issue for a stepfamily. Often, it is the mother and the stepmother who have the most difficulty. What can help?

A key to success: Set reasonable boundaries. If you try to shut out the other parent altogether, your child might suffer emotionally.* A child's parents, the ones who 'caused his birth,' have a unique place in his life. (Proverbs 23:22, 25) On the other hand, if you give a former spouse too much influence in your household, you can frustrate or even anger your new mate. Strive for balance, setting reasonable boundaries to protect your marriage, while remaining cooperative with the other parent to the extent possible.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- When you speak with your former spouse, focus on your children and minimize discussion about other matters. For example, you might tactfully ask if it is possible to schedule a regular time for phone calls during the day. That usually works better than phone calls at random times or late at night.
- If you do not have custody of your children, perhaps you can use phone calls, letters, text messages, or e-mail to maintain regular contact. (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) Some even use video-

* Of course, if a former spouse is threatening or abusive, you may need to set stricter limits for your family's safety.

conferencing. You may gain more insight into your children—and provide a more positive influence—than you may think is even possible.

TIPS FOR STEPMOTHERS

- Show "fellow feeling" to the children's mother by making it clear that you are not trying to replace her. (1 Peter 3:8) Provide updates when her children are with you, focusing mostly on the good. (Proverbs 16:24) Ask for her advice, and thank her when she offers it.
- Limit displays of affection with the children in their mother's presence. Beverly, a stepmother in the United States, says: "My young stepchildren wanted to call me Mom. We agreed with them that this was OK at our house but that they wouldn't call me Mom when they were with their mother, Jane, or her family. Jane and I got along better after this. In fact, we later worked together on school plays and field trips."

TIPS TO HELP PARENTS AND STEPPARENTS GET ALONG

- Never speak badly about an absent parent or stepparent within earshot of the children. It is easy to lapse into such negative talk, but it is very distressing to a child. And you never know how or when your words may be repeated. (Ecclesiastes 10:20) If a child says that the other parent or stepparent bad-mouthed you, focus on the child's feelings. You might say something along these lines: "I am sorry you had to hear that. Your

You may have more influence on your children than you realize



Mom is mad at me, and sometimes when people are angry, they say things that aren't kind."

■ Try to have consistent rules and discipline in the two households. If this is not possible, explain the differences without demeaning the other parent. Consider the following scenario:

Stepmother: *Tim, please hang up your wet towel.*

Tim: *At Mom's house, we leave them on the floor and she hangs them up.*

Stepmother (angrily): *Well, she is just teaching you to be lazy.*

Would this response be better?

Stepmother (calmly): *Oh, OK. Here we hang them up ourselves.*

■ Avoid scheduling activities for your children during the time that they will spend with the other parent. (Matthew 7:12) If you cannot adjust the activity, get permission from the other parent before telling the children what you have planned.

TRY THIS: Follow these steps the next time you meet your mate's former spouse or the spouse of your former mate:

1. Make eye contact and smile. Avoid sighing, drooping your shoulders, or rolling your eyes.
2. Greet the person by name. For example, say, "Hello, Jane."
3. Include the person in the conversation if you are in a group.

RELATIONSHIP 2: ADULT CHILDREN

The book *Step Wars* quotes one woman as complaining about the way her husband tends to side with his adult children and refuses to acknowledge that they treat her unkindly. "My fury escalates so fast," she says. How can you keep relationships with the adult children from damaging your marriage?

A key to success: Show empathy. The Bible says: "Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person." (1 Corinthians 10:24) Try to understand and identify with

the other person's feelings. Adult stepchildren may fear losing their parent's affection. Or they may feel that by welcoming a stepparent, they would be disloyal to their original family. Meanwhile, parents might worry that criticizing their children will push them away.

Instead of trying to force a friendship, let your relationship with your stepchildren develop naturally. In general, it is unwise to try to coerce or pressure someone into feeling real love. (Song of Solomon 8:4) So try to set reasonable, realistic expectations when it comes to closeness with your stepchildren.

Do not say everything that you think or feel, even if you are mistreated. (Proverbs 29:11) When controlling your speech is especially hard, pray as did King David of Israel: "Do set a guard, O Jehovah, for my mouth; do set a watch over the door of my lips."—Psalm 141:3.

If you decide to live in the house that the children were raised in, you may be surprised at the attachment they still feel toward it. Try to mini-

Politeness and respect go a long way





Try to show love to all the children in the family

mize changes, especially to their old rooms. You could also consider moving to a new residence.

TRY THIS: If your adult stepchildren are persistently rude or disrespectful to you, share your feelings with your mate and listen carefully to his or her thoughts. Do not pressure your mate to correct the children. Instead, simply try to build mutual understanding between the two of you. Once you “think in agreement” about the situation, you can work together to improve it.—2 Corinthians 13:11.

RELATIONSHIP 3: OTHER RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

Marion, a stepmother in Canada, says: “My parents often gave presents to my son but not to my husband’s kids. We would try to make up for it, but sometimes we could not afford to.”

A key to success: Put your new family first. Tell your relatives and friends about your commitment to your new family. (1 Timothy 5:8) While you cannot expect instant love for new family members from all relatives and friends, you can ask them to be polite and fair. Explain how hurt the children will be if they are passed over when it comes to attention and other kindnesses.

Try to let grandparents from your first marriage have a place in your children’s lives. A

mother in England named Susan relates: “I remarried 18 months after my first husband died, and his parents struggled to accept my new husband. Things got better when we included them more, had the kids call them, and thanked them for their support.”

TRY THIS: Identify the friend or relative with whom you have the most difficult relationship, and then discuss with your mate how you can improve that relationship.

Relationships with those outside your household can challenge your stepfamily. Apply Scriptural counsel, though, and your family can receive the blessing the Bible promises: “By wisdom a household will be built up, and by discernment it will prove firmly established.”—Proverbs 24:3. ■

ASK YOURSELF . . .

■ *How can I get along better with my mate’s former spouse?*

■ *How can we help relatives and friends to avoid even inadvertently harming our family?*

Does Jehovah Really Care About You?

“Feelings of worthlessness are probably the biggest roadblock that I am trying to overcome.” So said one woman who found it hard to believe that Jehovah could ever find a reason to care about her. Can you identify with her feelings? If so, you may wonder, ‘Does Jehovah really care about his worshippers as individuals?’ The answer is yes! We find proof of Jehovah’s personal care in the words of Jesus.—**Read John 6:44.**

What did Jesus, who knows the personality and will of Jehovah better than anyone else, say? (Luke 10:22) Jesus explained: “No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.” So, we cannot become a follower of Christ—and a worshipper of our heavenly Father, Jehovah—unless Jehovah personally draws us. (2 Thessalonians 2:13) If we understand what Jesus meant, then we will see in his words powerful evidence of God’s personal care.

What does it mean that Jehovah draws us? The Greek verb rendered “draws” is also used in reference to hauling in a net of fishes. (John 21:6, 11) Does Jehovah drag us against our will, forcing us to serve him? No. Jehovah gave us free will, so he does not force our heart open. (Deuteronomy 30:19, 20) One scholar puts it this way: “There is no handle on the outside of the door of the human heart. It must be opened from within.” Jehovah searches through the billions of hearts in this world, looking for individuals who are inclined toward him. (1 Chronicles 28:9) When he finds such a person, he responds in a touching way. How so?

Jehovah gently attracts, or tugs at, the heart of an individual who is “rightly disposed.” (Acts 13:48) Jehovah does so in two ways—through the Bi-

ble’s message of good news, which reaches us as individuals, and through his holy spirit. When Jehovah sees a heart that is responsive to Bible truth, he uses his spirit to help the individual to grasp and apply that truth in his life. (1 Corinthians 2:11, 12) Without divine help, we could never become genuine followers of Jesus and devoted worshippers of Jehovah.

What, then, do Jesus’ words recorded at John 6:44 teach us about Jehovah God? Jehovah draws people because he sees something good in their

“There is no handle on the outside of the door of the human heart. It must be opened from within”

heart and cares about them as individuals. Understanding this reassuring truth brought comfort to the woman mentioned at the outset. She says: “Being a servant of Jehovah is the highest privilege anyone could have. And if Jehovah chose me to be a servant of his, then I must be precious to him.” What about you? Does knowing that Jehovah cares about his worshippers as individuals move you to want to open the door of your heart? ■

SUGGESTED BIBLE READING FOR MAY
Luke 22–John 16

Can our sins be forgiven?

According to the Bible, all humans are sinners. We inherited the tendency to sin from the first man, Adam. Thus, we sometimes do bad things and may later regret what we did. God's Son, Jesus Christ, paid for our sins by dying for us. His ransom sacrifice made forgiveness possible. It is a gift from God.—**Read Romans 3:23, 24.**

Some people have committed gross sins and wonder whether God can forgive them. Happily, the Word of God says: "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from *all* sin." (1 John 1:7) Jehovah willingly forgives even serious sins if we have a proper, repentant attitude.—**Read Isaiah 1:18.**

What must we do to be forgiven?

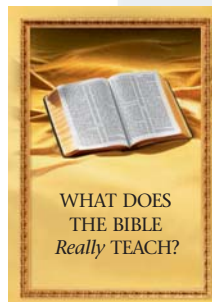
If we want Jehovah God to forgive us, we need to learn about him—to understand his ways, his advice, and his requirements. (John 17:3) Jehovah generously forgives those who repent of their misconduct and try to change.—**Read Acts 3:19.**

Gaining God's approval is not too difficult for us. Jehovah understands our weaknesses. He is merciful and kind. Does not his loving-kindness make you want to learn more about how to please him? —**Read Psalm 103:13, 14.**

READ ANSWERS TO MORE
BIBLE QUESTIONS ONLINE AT
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Gaining God's approval
is not too difficult



For more information,
see chapter 5 of this
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Truth

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We warmly invite you to hear the answers
at this year's three-day **convention**
presented by Jehovah's Witnesses.

THEME:

‘God’s Word Is Truth!’

based on Jesus’ words recorded at John 17:17.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The intriguing talk entitled “**What Is Truth?**”
will examine why we can trust God’s Word,
the Bible.

Two dramatic plays will bring Bible stories and
their lessons to life.

WHO MAY ATTEND:

Everyone. You won’t be charged admission,
and no collection will be taken.

TIME AND LOCATION:

Find a convention near you, and watch a video
about our conventions at **www.jw.org**.

(Look under ABOUT US/CONVENTIONS)

Go to **www.jw.org** to see the **program** schedule.

(Look under PUBLICATIONS/BOOKS & BROCHURES)



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