

JULY 1, 2013

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



SHOULD YOU TRUST
RELIGION?

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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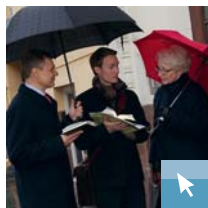
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Why Question Religion?

Suppose you need to have surgery for a life-threatening illness. You would want to have the utmost confidence in the surgeon, since your life will be in his hands. Would it not be prudent to review his record of experience?

Similarly, it is wise to examine religion carefully. If you belong to a religious organization, you are, in effect, putting your spiritual life in its hands. This includes your prospects for salvation.

Jesus provided a standard to help us view religion objectively. He said: "Each tree is known by its own fruit." (Luke 6:44) For example, when you look at a particular religion or denomination, what fruitage does it bear? Do its religious leaders place excessive emphasis on money? Do its members follow Bible principles regarding warfare and morals? Finally, is any religion deserving of trust? We invite you to examine the following articles.

"Each tree is known by its own fruit."

—Luke 6:44



Can You Trust Religion Regarding Money?

Estelle* was a regular churchgoer with several children. “I told my minister that I wanted to learn about the Bible,” she says. But he never offered to teach her. Finally, she stopped attending church. She continues: “The church officials wrote and basically said that if I could not be there, just send money. I thought, ‘They don’t care if I even attend; they just want my money.’”

Angelina, who has always been religious, said: “In my church, they passed the basket three times during each worship service, and we were expected to give each time. They were always asking for money. I thought to myself, ‘They do not have God’s spirit.’”

Do the religions in your area employ direct or subtle pressure to obtain money? Is that in harmony with the Bible?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

Jesus, the founder of Christianity, said: “You received free, give free.” (Matthew 10:8) The message of the Bible is priceless and should be available to all who want it.

How did the early Christians care for congregation expenses?

Each one contributed “just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compul-

sion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7) The apostle Paul said: “It was with working night and day, so as not to put an expensive burden upon any one of you, that we preached the good news.” (1 Thessalonians 2:9) Paul worked as a tentmaker to support his ministry.—Acts 18:2, 3.

HOW DO JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES MEASURE UP?

Jehovah’s Witnesses commonly meet in modest buildings called Kingdom Halls. How are

How *should* religion be financed?

expenses covered? They never pass collection plates, nor do they send out envelopes to solicit donations. Rather, any who appreciate the spiritual program can discreetly place a donation in a contribution box at the Kingdom Hall.

This magazine obviously costs money to print and ship. Yet you will never see commercial advertising or appeals for money. The emphasis is on dispensing Bible truth.

What do you think: Is the spirit behind these arrangements in accord with Jesus’ words and the example of the early Christians?

* Some names in this series of articles have been changed.



Can You Trust Religion Regarding War?

Alberto served in the army for almost ten years. He recalls: “Our chaplain blessed us, saying, ‘God is with you.’ But I wondered, ‘I am going out to kill, yet the Bible says that “you shall not kill.”’”

Ray was in the navy during World War II. Once, he asked the chaplain: “You come onto the ship and pray for the troops and for victory. Doesn’t the enemy have the same arrangement?” The chaplain answered that the Lord works in mysterious ways.

If that answer does not satisfy you, you are not alone.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

Jesus said that one of the greatest commandments of God is to “love your neighbor as yourself.” (Mark 12:31) Did Jesus place a limit on loving our neighbor based on where that neighbor lives or on what nationality he is? No. He told his disciples: “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.” (John 13:34, 35) Their love for one another would be so extraordinary that it would be an identifying mark. They would rather *give* their life for one another than to *take* life from others.

The early Christians lived in harmony with Jesus’ words. *The Encyclopedia of Religion* notes: “The early church fathers, including Tertullian

and Origen, affirmed that Christians were constrained from taking human life, a principle that prevented them from participating in the Roman army.”

HOW DO JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES MEASURE UP?

Since Jehovah’s Witnesses reside in almost every country, individuals among them find themselves living on both sides in disputes between nations. Yet, they do their best to maintain the identifying mark of love.

Have religious leaders taught true Christian love?

For example, during the 1994 ethnic conflict between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, Jehovah’s Witnesses remained completely neutral. Witnesses of one tribe sheltered Witnesses of the other tribe, often at great risk to their own lives. When two Hutu Witnesses who had sheltered their Tutsi brothers were caught, the Hutu Interahamwe militia said, “You must die because you helped the Tutsi to escape.” Sadly, both of the Hutu Witnesses were then killed.—John 15:13.

What do you think: Are the actions of Jehovah’s Witnesses in harmony with Jesus’ words about self-sacrificing love?

Based on U.S. Army photo



Can You Trust Religion Regarding Morals?

"I went to college with many who claimed to be religious," says Sylvia, who works in the health-care business. "Yet, they cheated on tests and took illegal drugs. Religion had no effect on their personal lives."

A man named Lionel states: "My workmates lie and call in sick when they are not really sick. Religion is something that they have but don't use—like a piece of furniture just for show."

Religion does not exert a powerful moral influence in the lives of most people. Many today have "a form of godly devotion" but prove "false to its power." (2 Timothy 3:5) Their religious leaders have not set the right example, nor have the clergy given their flocks the needed Scriptural counsel to live morally. Little wonder that many believe that God is not interested in the way they live.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

The Bible shows that God has feelings and that our conduct matters greatly to him. When the Israelites of old rebelled against God, "they would make him feel hurt." (Psalm 78:40) However, there is great "joy in heaven" when a person sincerely changes his wrong behavior. (Luke 15:7) When a person comes to appreciate our heavenly Father's beautiful qualities, his love for God will grow, motivating him to

love what God loves and hate what God hates. —Amos 5:15.

HOW DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEASURE UP?

Jehovah's Witnesses "promote strong family ties and develop productive and honest citizens," states The *Deseret News* of Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A. The newspaper added: "Members

Have religious leaders helped their flocks to apply God's moral standards?

believe in a strong moral code. They believe smoking, overdrinking, drug misuse, gambling, sexual promiscuity and homosexuality are spiritually damaging practices."

How does learning about God's personality help the Witnesses? "Fraud is common in the health-care business," says Sylvia, mentioned earlier. "It would be easy to go along with it. But understanding how Jehovah* feels about it helps me to do what is right. I am happy and have inner peace." Sylvia is convinced that living in harmony with her religious convictions has improved her life.

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



Why not ask Jehovah's Witnesses why they trust their religion?

Is Any Religion Deserving of Trust?

If a particular religion has disappointed you, you may find it hard to trust any religion. But be assured that a religion worthy of your confidence does exist. When he was on earth, Jesus gathered a group of faithful followers and taught them to live by God's standards. Genuine followers of Christ—conscientious individuals who endeavor to live by Christian standards—still exist. Where can you find them?

Estelle, mentioned in an earlier article, says: "I finally started learning the Bible when I began to study with Jehovah's Witnesses. It didn't take me long to understand John 8:32, which reads: 'You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'"

Ray, also mentioned earlier, notes: "By studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, I learned that God is not responsible for mankind's suffering. I was thankful to see that while God has good reason to permit wickedness now, he also promises to eliminate it soon."

Obviously, it is difficult to swim against the current of this world's low moral standards. But it *is* possible. Many people desire assistance to understand and apply the Bible. That is why Jehovah's Witnesses conduct free home Bible studies with millions worldwide. Each week, multitudes are learning what the Bible really teaches. As a result, they are drawing close to their Creator and building happier lives.*

The next time you meet Jehovah's Witnesses, why not ask them why they trust their religion? Examine their teachings and their record. Then decide for yourself if a religion exists that you can trust. ■

* For more information, see the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



Making a Second Marriage Work

HERMAN:* *“My first wife died of cancer after we had been married for 34 years. When I remarried, my wife Linda felt that I was always comparing her to my first wife. To make matters worse, old friends often talked about my late wife’s fine qualities, and this upset Linda.”*

LINDA: *“After Herman and I married, I felt that I was living in the shadow of his first wife. She was so well-loved, soft-spoken, and refined. Sometimes I wonder if I will ever be as close to him as she was.”*

Herman and Linda are happy that they found each other. Linda, who divorced her first husband, even calls Herman her “knight in shining armor.” Yet, as they acknowledge, a second marriage may bring challenges that never existed in a first marriage.[#]

If you have remarried, how do you feel about

* Names have been changed.

[#] Of course, death of a mate and divorce end marriages in very different ways. This article is designed to help a person in either situation to be successful in a second marriage.

your second marriage? A wife named Tamara, who remarried three years after her divorce, says: “When you marry for the first time, there is that special feeling that your marriage will last forever. But with a second marriage, you may not have that feeling, as you are always aware that your first marriage ended.”

Nevertheless, many couples have found deep and lasting happiness after remarrying. They made their marriage a success—and you can be successful too! How? Consider three com-

mon challenges and how Bible principles can help you to meet them.*

CHALLENGE 1: YOU STRUGGLE TO KEEP AN EARLIER MARRIAGE FROM OVERSHADOWING YOUR CURRENT MARRIAGE.

"I can't simply erase memories of my first marriage, especially when we travel to the same places where my ex-husband and I went on vacation," says Ellen, who lives in South Africa. "Sometimes I end up comparing my current husband to my former husband." On the other hand, if your mate was previously married, you may resent it if your mate often talks about that marriage.

SUGGESTION: Accept the fact that it is unrealistic to expect that you or your mate will simply forget a first marriage, especially if it lasted several years. In fact, some people admit that they have accidentally called their mate by the name of their previous spouse! How can you deal with such a situation or similar ones? "Try to understand each other," advises the Bible.—1 Peter 3:8, *New Century Version*.

Do not jealously forbid all mention of a first marriage. If your mate feels the need to talk about life with his or her first spouse, listen sympathetically and compassionately. Also, do not hastily conclude that you are being compared. "My wife Kaitlyn never viewed the topic of my late wife as taboo," says Ian, who remarried ten years ago. "Rather, she saw it as a way to learn what made me who I am today." You may even find that such conversations will help you to build a closer friendship with your new mate.

Focus on your *present* mate's unique and positive qualities. True, your mate may lack certain qualities or abilities that your former spouse had. But your current mate likely excels in other areas. Therefore, strengthen the foundation of

* For information regarding the challenges of raising stepchildren, see the series of articles "Secrets of Successful Step-families" in the April 2012 issue of *Awake!* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

your present marriage, "not in comparison with the other person," but by reflecting on and appreciating what you love about your mate. (Galatians 6:4) A man named Edmond, who has been married twice, puts it this way, "Just as no two friendships are the same, so no two marriages are the same."

How can you balance fond memories of your first marriage with the life you have started with your new mate? "I once explained to my wife that my first marriage was like a beautiful book written by my first wife and me," says Jared. "From time to time, I may open and read that book and reflect on our good experiences. But I don't *live* in that book. Rather, my wife and I are writing our *own* book together, and this is where I now live happily."

TRY THIS: Ask your mate whether he or she ever feels awkward when the topic of a first marriage arises. Identify times when it would be best not to talk about a first marriage.

CHALLENGE 2: YOU STRUGGLE TO INTERACT WITH OLD FRIENDS WHO ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH YOUR NEW SPOUSE.

"For some time after we married, my wife felt that a few of my friends were analyzing her and testing her out," says Javier, who remarried six years after his divorce. A husband named Leo faced a different situation. He relates, "Some people told my wife how much they loved and missed her former husband—right in front of me!"

SUGGESTION: Try to put yourself in your friends' shoes. "I think old friends sometimes find it very painful and awkward to associate with someone who is just one half of the couple they have known," says Ian, quoted earlier. So "be reasonable, exhibiting all mildness toward all" people. (Titus 3:2) Allow time for your friends and family to adjust. As your marriage has changed, so your friendships may change too. Javier, quoted previously, says that as time passed, he and his wife rekindled old friendships. "But we also try



Create new memories that
unite you as a couple

husband. I even worried that she would decide I wasn't good enough and then leave me for someone else."

SUGGESTION: Freely share your concerns with your mate. "There is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential talk," the Bible says. (Proverbs 15:22) Confidential talk eventually helped Andrew and Riley to trust each other. "I told Riley that I would never resort to divorce as an easy way out of problems," Andrew says, "and Riley assured me of the same thing. Gradually, I've come to trust her implicitly."

If your present mate was betrayed in an earlier marriage, take deliberate steps to earn your mate's trust. For example, Michel and Sabine, whose first marriages ended in divorce, agreed to tell each other if they had any contact with their former spouses. "This commitment made us feel safe and secure," says Sabine.—Ephesians 4:25.

TRY THIS: Set limits on private communication with the opposite sex, whether in person, on the phone, or online.

Many second marriages have succeeded, and yours can too. After all, compared to the first time you married, you likely know yourself better. "I have found immeasurable comfort in my marriage to Riley," says Andrew, quoted earlier. "After 13 years of marriage, we have a very close relationship—one that we never want to lose." ■

to make new friends as a couple," he adds, "and that helps us too."

Consider your mate's feelings when you spend time with old friends. For example, if your first marriage comes up in conversation, use tact and good judgment so that your current mate does not feel excluded. "If a person speaks words without thinking," says a Bible proverb, "then those words can hurt like a sword. But a wise person is careful with the things he says. His words can heal those hurts."—Proverbs 12:18, *Holy Bible—Easy-to-Read Version*.

TRY THIS: Anticipate social events that could be awkward for you or your mate. In advance, discuss the best way to handle your friends' questions and comments about a first marriage.

CHALLENGE 3: YOU STRUGGLE TO TRUST YOUR NEW MATE BECAUSE YOUR FIRST SPOUSE WAS DISLOYAL.

"I used to be terrified of being betrayed again," says Andrew, whose first wife left him. Later, he married his present wife, Riley. "I often wondered if I could ever be as good as Riley's first

ASK YOURSELF . . .

- *What are some unique qualities of my mate that I especially value?*
- *If the topic of my first marriage comes up, how can I handle the subject in a way that reassures and dignifies my current mate?*

He Fills Our “Hearts to the Full”

Does Jehovah really care about us, or is he indifferent to the plight of humans on this earth? The Bible’s answer to that question warms our heart. God does indeed care about the human family, and he wants us to enjoy life. Every day he allows humans—even the most thankless among them—to benefit from his abundant goodness. Consider the words of the apostle Paul.—**Read Acts 14:16, 17.**

Addressing people in the city of Lystra who were not worshippers of God, Paul said: “In the past generations [God] permitted all the nations to go on in their ways, although, indeed, he did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer.” What did those words mean to Paul’s hearers?

The people of Lystra did not have to look far to see the truthfulness of Paul’s words. They were part of an agricultural community and lived in a fertile and well-watered region. But, as Paul reminded them, God is the Source of the rain and the fruitful seasons. Thus, every time they harvested a bountiful crop and enjoyed a delicious meal, they were benefiting from God’s goodness.

Paul’s words to the people of Lystra teach us several important lessons about Jehovah God.

Jehovah gives us free will. Note that Jehovah permitted all the Gentile nations “to go on in their ways.” A reference work for Bible translators says that this expression can mean “to go as they pleased” or “to do as they themselves thought best.” Jehovah does not force anyone to worship him. He has endowed us with free will—the ability to choose our own life course.—Deuteronomy 30:19.

Jehovah wants us to know him. He has not left “himself without witness,” explained Paul. The previously mentioned reference work says that this phrase can be rendered “he has shown people clearly just what kind of God he is.” God’s creations bear eloquent testimony to his “invisible qualities,” including his goodness, wisdom, power, and love. (Romans 1:20) Jehovah has revealed much more about himself in the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) Is it not clear that he wants us to know him?

Every day God allows humans—even the most thankless among them—to benefit from his abundant goodness

Jehovah wants us to be happy. He fills our “hearts to the full with food and good cheer,” said Paul. Even the sinner who does not acknowledge Jehovah may eat food to his heart’s content and find a measure of happiness in life. However, God wants us to enjoy true and lasting happiness. That is possible only if we learn the truth about him and apply it in our life.—Psalm 144:15; Matthew 5:3.

We all benefit from Jehovah’s goodness every day. Why not learn more about how you can show your gratitude to the God who fills your heart “to the full with food and good cheer”? ■

SUGGESTED BIBLE READING FOR JULY
Acts 11-28



AS TOLD BY JUKKA SYLGREN

YEAR BORN:

1966

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

FINLAND

HISTORY:

SOCIAL ACTIVIST



Animalia

“I no longer feel that I have to change the world”

MY PAST: I have loved nature ever since I was a child. My family often enjoyed outings at the fascinating forests and beautiful lakes that surround our hometown of Jyväskylä, in Central Finland. I’m also an animal lover. When I was a child, I wanted to hug every cat and dog I saw! As I grew up, I became disturbed by the way people often abuse animals. In time, I joined an animal-rights organization, where I met other like-minded people.

We actively campaigned for animal rights. We distributed information and arranged protest marches and demonstrations against fur shops and animal-testing laboratories. We even formed a new animal-protection organization. Because we took radical measures to try to further our cause, we were often in trouble with the authorities. I was arrested and taken to court several times.

In addition to my concern for animals, I was troubled by other problems around the world. Eventually, I became involved with a number of organizations, including Amnesty International and Greenpeace. I focused all my energy on supporting their activities. I advocated on behalf of the poor, the starving, and other less fortunate people.

I gradually realized, however, that I could not change the world. Even though those organizations managed to get a few small problems corrected, the big problems only seemed to get worse. It was as if the forces of evil had swallowed up the whole world and nobody cared about anything. I felt powerless.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: Feeling sad because of my helplessness, I began to think about God and the Bible. I had previously studied the Bible with Jehovah’s

Witnesses. Although I appreciated that the Witnesses were kind and showed me personal interest, I hadn't been ready to change my lifestyle. This time, things were different.

I took out my Bible and began to read it. It proved to be a real balm for my wounds. I noticed many Bible passages that teach us to treat animals kindly. For example, Proverbs 12:10 says that "good people take care of their animals." (*Good News Translation*) I also discerned that God is not the cause of the world's problems. Rather, our problems have grown worse because most people don't follow his direction. I was deeply impressed when I learned of Jehovah's love and his long-suffering.—Psalm 103:8-14.

About this time, I found a coupon for the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* and sent it in. Soon a Witness couple came to my door and offered me a Bible study, which I accepted. I also began to attend Christian meetings at the Kingdom Hall. As a result, Bible truth began to take root in my heart.

Thanks to the Bible, I was able to make a lot of changes. I quit smoking and overdrinking. I cleaned up my appearance and speech. And I adjusted my attitude toward secular authority. (Romans 13:1) I also abandoned my immoral lifestyle, an area in which I had been very liberal.

The hardest change for me was developing the correct view of civic organizations. It didn't happen overnight. At first, I felt that I would be betraying these organizations if I resigned. However, I came to appreciate that God's Kingdom is the only real hope for our world. I decided to throw all my energy into supporting that Kingdom and helping others to learn about it.—Matthew 6:33.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: As an activist, I used to divide people sharply into two groups—either good or bad—and I was ready to act against those

whom I considered bad. But thanks to the Bible, I no longer feel strong hatred for others. Rather, I try to cultivate Christian love for all people. (Matthew 5:44) Among other ways, I show this love by sharing the good news of God's Kingdom. I'm glad to see how this benevolent work promotes peace and happiness and gives people real hope.

I've gained peace of mind by leaving matters in Jehovah's hands. I'm convinced that he, as the Creator, will not allow animals and humans to be mistreated forever, nor will he allow our beautiful earth to be destroyed. On the contrary, through his Kingdom, he will soon repair all the damage that has been done. (Isaiah 11:1-9) It brings me great joy not only to know these truths but also to help others put faith in them. I no longer feel that I have to change the world. ■



Does God Care About Our Suffering?



The following is a typical conversation that one of Jehovah's Witnesses might have with a neighbor. Let us imagine that a Witness named Michelle has come to the home of a woman named Sophia.

HOW COULD HE LET THIS HAPPEN?

Michelle: Today I'm sharing this tract with everyone in the area. It's entitled *Would You Like to Know the Truth?* Here's your copy.

Sophia: Is this about religion?

Michelle: Yes. Notice the six questions listed on the cover. Which of these questions—

Sophia: Let me stop you there. You would be wasting your time talking with me.

Michelle: Why do you say that?

Sophia: The truth is, I'm not sure that I even believe in God.

Michelle: Well, I appreciate your being honest with me. May I ask, Have you always felt that way?

Sophia: No, I grew up attending church. But I stopped going a long time ago.

Michelle: I see. By the way, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Michelle.

Sophia: I'm Sophia.

Michelle: Nice to meet you, Sophia.

Sophia: You too.

Michelle: I'm not here to force my beliefs on you, Sophia. I am curious, though. Is there something in particular that caused you to doubt God's existence?

Sophia: Yes. My mother was involved in a car crash 17 years ago.

Michelle: I'm so sorry to hear that. Was she injured?

Sophia: Yes, she's been paralyzed ever since.

Michelle: That is so sad. You must be devastated.

Sophia: I am. I just can't help but wonder, If God exists, how could he let this happen? Why would God allow us to suffer like this?

IS IT WRONG TO ASK WHY?

Michelle: Your feelings and questions are understandable. When we suffer, it's only normal to wonder why. In fact, even some faithful men and women in Bible times wondered about that!

Sophia: Really?

Michelle: Yes. Would it be all right if I showed you an example from the Bible?

Sophia: I would like that.

Michelle: Notice what the faithful prophet Habakkuk asked God, as recorded at Habakkuk, chapter 1, verses 2 and 3: "How long, O Jehovah, must I cry for help, and you do not hear? How long shall I call to you for aid from violence, and you do not save? Why is it that you make me see what is hurtful?" Do those questions sound similar to the ones you've been asking?

Sophia: They do.

Michelle: God never scolded Habakkuk for asking those questions, nor did he tell Habakkuk that he simply needed more faith.

Sophia: Interesting.

JEHOVAH HATES SUFFERING

Michelle: The Bible teaches that God notices our suffering and that he cares about it.

Sophia: What do you mean?

Michelle: Let me show you an example here at Exodus 3:7. Would you mind reading that verse?

Sophia: All right. It says: "And Jehovah added: 'Unquestionably I have seen the affliction of

my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their outcry as a result of those who drive them to work; because I well know the pains they suffer.’”

Michelle: Thank you. Based on this scripture, does God notice when his people suffer?

Sophia: Yes, it seems that he does.

Michelle: And he’s not just vaguely aware of what happens. Look again at the last part of that verse. God said: “*I well know the pains they suffer.*” Do those sound like the words of a cold or aloof God?

Sophia: No, not really.

Michelle: Of course, it’s one thing to notice a situation, but to be moved by it—to have feelings about the situation—is something else altogether.

Sophia: True.

Michelle: With that in mind, let’s read about another instance when God’s people were suffering. It’s recorded at Isaiah 63:9. The first part of that verse says: “During all their distress *it was distressing to him.*” Would you say, then, that God was affected by the suffering of his people?

Sophia: Yes, it does sound that way.

Michelle: The truth is, Sophia, God cares a great deal about us, and he hates to see us suffer. When we hurt, he hurts with us.

WHY HAS HE WAITED?

Michelle: Before I go, there’s one other thought I would like to share with you.

Sophia: All right.

Michelle: Consider what the Bible teaches us about God’s power. The verse I have in mind is Jeremiah 10:12. Would you please read it?

Sophia: Sure. It says: “He is the Maker of the earth by his power, the One firmly establishing

the productive land by his wisdom, and the One who by his understanding stretched out the heavens.”

Michelle: Thank you. Let’s think about this verse for a moment. Would God have needed a lot of power to create the vast universe and everything in it?

Sophia: Definitely.

Michelle: Now, if God has the power to create everything around us, would we not expect that he also has the power to control his creation?

Sophia: Yes.

Michelle: Think again of your mother. Why does it bother you to see her suffer?

Sophia: Because I love her. She’s my mother.

Michelle: And if you had the power to heal her today, would you?

Sophia: Of course.

Michelle: Think of what that means. The Bible teaches that God notices our suffering, he feels for us, and he has a vast amount of power. Can you imagine, then, how much self-control it must take for God *not* to step in and immediately end our suffering?

Sophia: I never thought of it that way before.

Michelle: Could it be that he has good reason for not yet intervening to end our problems?*

Sophia: Hmm, I suppose he might.

Michelle: I hear your telephone ringing, so let me come back another time, and we can discuss this topic further.

Sophia: Thank you. I would like that.[#] ■

* For more information, see chapter 11 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

[#] A future article in this series will consider why God allows suffering.

Do you have a particular Bible subject that you have wondered about? Are you curious about any of the beliefs or religious practices of Jehovah’s Witnesses? If so, do not hesitate to ask one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. He or she will be pleased to discuss such matters with you.

Is eternal life possible?

The first man, Adam, lived for centuries. But finally, he grew old and died. Since then, people have tried many ways to avoid aging. Yet no one has ever been able to escape death. Why? Adam grew old and died because he sinned by disobeying God. We grow old because from Adam we have inherited sin and its penalty, death.—**Read Genesis 5:5; Romans 5:12.**

For us to enjoy eternal life, we need someone to pay a ransom for us. (Job 33:24, 25) A ransom is the price paid to set one free, and in our case, we need to be freed from death. (Exodus 21:29, 30) Jesus paid the price when he died for us.—**Read John 3:16.**

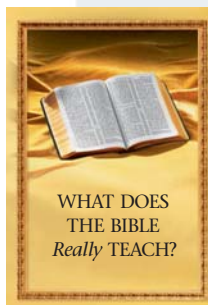
How can we gain eternal life?

Not everyone will be set free from sickness and aging. In fact, people who disobey God, as Adam did, will lose the privilege of life. Only people who are forgiven for their sins will enjoy eternal life.—**Read Isaiah 33:24; 35:3-6.**

To be forgiven, we must take action. We need to get to know God by studying his Word, the Bible. It teaches us how to enjoy a better way of life and also how to gain God's favor and eternal life.—**Read John 17:3; Acts 3:19.**



What provision can set us free from death?



For more information, see chapter 3 of this book, published by Jehovah's Witnesses

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