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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



WHY SO MUCH
SUFFERING?
WHEN WILL IT
END?

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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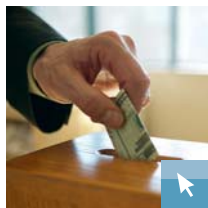
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So Many Innocent Lives Destroyed!

Little Noelle was an affectionate child who loved to draw. One summer evening she wandered into her backyard and somehow tumbled into the family's swimming pool. She drowned just two weeks before her fourth birthday.

Charlotte, Daniel, Olivia, Josephine . . . These are the names of some of the 20 six- or seven-year-olds among the 26 victims gunned down at a school in Connecticut, U.S.A., on December 14, 2012. At a memorial service, President Obama called out the children's names and told the grieving audience: "These tragedies must end."

Eighteen-year-old Bano left Iraq in 1996 and moved with her family to Norway. Her friends called her by the nickname Sun Rays. Sadly, however, on July 22, 2011, Bano was one of the 77 victims whose lives were cut short by an extremist, who boasted: "I wish to apologize . . . that I wasn't able to execute more."

Similar heart-wrenching stories have been reported over and over around the world. Think of the grief and pain that have resulted from accidents, crime, warfare, terrorism, natural disasters, and other tragedies. So many innocent lives snuffed out and so much suffering, often for no apparent reason!

Some people blame God, reasoning that our Creator does not care about the human fami-

ly. Others conclude that God sees our suffering but simply chooses not to intervene. Still others say that such tragedies are predestined. There seems to be no end to opinions on the subject. Where can we find reliable and satisfying answers? In the following articles, we will look into God's Word, the Bible, for answers on what causes suffering and how it will be brought to an end.

Why All the Suffering?

To understand why there is so much suffering and why human efforts to eliminate it have been unsuccessful, we need to identify the real causes behind it all. Though the causes are varied and complex, we can be thankful that the Bible can help us to identify them. In this article, we will examine five fundamental reasons why there is so much suffering. We invite you to consider carefully what the Bible says and see how God's Word helps us to look beyond the surface to discern the true cause of this important problem.—2 Timothy 3:16.



■ EFFECTS OF BAD GOVERNMENT

"When anyone wicked bears rule, the people sigh," says the Bible.—Proverbs 29:2.

History is filled with dictators who ruled with an iron fist, bringing untold suffering to their subjects. Of course, that is not true of all rulers. Some may have the best of intentions for their fellowmen. However, once they are in power, they often find that their efforts are frustrated by infighting and power struggles. Or they may abuse their power for personal gain, to the detriment of the people. "History is a tale of efforts that failed, of aspirations that weren't realized," said former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

The Bible also points out: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23) Imperfect humans lack the necessary wisdom and foresight to manage all their own affairs successfully. If people cannot direct their own steps, how can they direct the steps of

a nation? Can you see why human rulers do not have the ability to eliminate suffering? In fact, more often than not, bad government, or rulership, is the cause of suffering!

■ INFLUENCE OF FALSE RELIGION

"By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves," said Jesus.—John 13:35.

Religious leaders of every creed and denomination preach love and unity. The reality is that they have failed to instill in their followers a love strong enough to eliminate biases. Rather than helping to cultivate love, religion often contributes to the division, bigotry, and strife among peoples and national groups. In the conclusion of his book *Christianity and the World Religions*, theologian Hans Küng wrote: "The most fanatical, the cruelest political struggles are those that have been colored, inspired, and legitimized by religion."

In addition, clerics of many religions have openly condoned premarital and extramarital sex and homosexuality. This has led to the spread of disease, abortions, unwanted pregnancies, and broken marriages and families, resulting in untold pain and anguish.

■ HUMAN IMPERFECTION AND SELFISH DESIRES

“Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin.”
—James 1:14, 15.

All of us, because of inherited imperfection, are prone to errors and mistakes and have to fight against the desire for “doing the things willed by the flesh.” (Ephesians 2:3) When wrong desire coincides with opportunity, however, the battle can be especially challenging. If we give in to hurtful desire, the results can be devastating.

Author P. D. Mehta wrote: “A vast amount of suffering is due to our own lust, to our feverish pleasure-seeking and self-indulgence, to our greed and our ambition.” Cravings and addictions of all kinds—alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, and so on—have ruined many “respectable citizens” and have brought suffering to their family, friends, and others. In view of mankind’s imperfect nature, we have to agree when the Bible says: “It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail.”—Romans 8:22, *The New Testament in Modern English*, by J. B. Phillips.

■ POWER OF WICKED SPIRITS

The Bible reveals that Satan is “the god of this system of things” and that he is joined by powerful wicked spirits called demons.
—2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9.

Like Satan, the demons are actively engaged in controlling and misleading people. The apostle Paul acknowledged this when he said: “We have a wrestling, not against blood and flesh, but against the governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places.”
—Ephesians 6:12.

While the demons delight in harassing people, that is not their primary goal. They desire to turn people away from the Most High God, Jehovah. (Psalm 83:18) Practices such as astrology, magic, sorcery, and fortune-telling are just some of the devices that the demons use to deceive and control people. That is why Jehovah alerts us to those dangers and offers protection to all who oppose Satan and the demons.—James 4:7.

■ WE ARE LIVING IN “THE LAST DAYS”

Some two thousand years ago, the Bible foretold: “Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here.”

Pointing out what makes the times critical, it goes on to say: “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, . . . having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.” Surely a key reason for all the suffering we see today is that we are living in “the last days.”—2 Timothy 3:1-4.

In view of the factors we have considered, is it not clear why humans are unable to put an end to suffering, despite their good intentions? Where, then, can we turn for help? We must look to our Creator, who has promised to “break up the works of the Devil” and his followers. (1 John 3:8) The following article will consider what God will do to eliminate all causes of suffering.

The End of Suffering Is at Hand!

Imagine living in a world free of suffering—a world without crime, warfare, sickness, and natural disasters. Imagine waking up every morning without having to worry about discrimination, oppression, or economic uncertainty. Does all of this sound too good to be true? Granted, no human or man-made organization can bring about such conditions. But God has promised to do away with all causes of human suffering, including those discussed in the preceding article. Note the following promises from God’s Word, the Bible:

■ THE RULE OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

“The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.” —Daniel 2:44.

The Kingdom of God is a heavenly government. Its chosen Ruler, Jesus Christ, will take the place of all human rulership and will ensure that God’s will is done not only in heaven but also here on earth. (Matthew 6:9, 10) This government will not be replaced by any human government because it is “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Lasting peace will be assured.—2 Peter 1:11.

■ NO MORE FALSE RELIGION

“Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light. It is therefore nothing great if his ministers also keep transforming

themselves into ministers of righteousness. But their end shall be according to their works.” —2 Corinthians 11:14, 15.

False religion will be exposed as the work of the Devil and will be eliminated from the earth. Gone will be all religious bigotry and bloodshed. This will allow all lovers of the “living and true God” to worship him in “one faith” and “with spirit and truth.” What peace and unity!—1 Thesalonians 1:9; Ephesians 4:5; John 4:23.

■ HUMAN IMPERFECTION WILL BE NO MORE

“God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.”—Revelation 21:3, 4.

Jehovah God makes this possible by means of his Son, Jesus, who gave his life for the world of mankind. (John 3:16) Under Jesus’ direction, humankind will be brought to perfection. There will



no longer be any suffering because “God himself will be with them” and will erase “every tear from their eyes.” Human imperfection and suffering will soon be a thing of the past; “the righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it.”—Psalm 37:29.

■ **WICKED SPIRITS WILL BE GONE**

“He [Jesus Christ] seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he might not mislead the nations anymore.”—Revelation 20:2, 3.

All satanic influence will be gone when Satan and the demons are bound and hurled into “the abyss,” a state of total inactivity. They will no longer exercise their evil control over human affairs. What a relief it will be to live in a world free from the influence of Satan and the wicked spirits!

■ **“THE LAST DAYS” WILL BE OVER**

“The last days” will end with what Jesus called the “great tribulation.” He said: “Then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.”—Matthew 24:21.

The tribulation will be great in the sense that unprecedented calamities will occur. These will climax at “the war of the great day of God the Almighty,” better known as “Armageddon.”—Revelation 16:14, 16, footnote.

People everywhere who love what is right look forward to the end of this wicked system of things. Consider just a few of the blessings that await them under God’s Kingdom.

GOD WILL DO EVEN MORE!

“A great crowd” will be preserved into a peaceful new world: God’s Word says that an un-

numbered “great crowd” of people will “come out of the great tribulation” and be preserved alive into a righteous new world. (Revelation 7:9, 10, 14; 2 Peter 3:13) They will attribute their salvation to Jesus Christ, “the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.”—John 1:29.

Great benefits will come from divine education: In the new world, “the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah.” (Isaiah 11:9) This divine education will include instruction on how to live in peace with all people and in harmony with the environment. God promises: “I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk.”—Isaiah 48:17.

Dead loved ones will be raised from the grave: While on earth, Jesus raised his friend Lazarus from the dead. (John 11:1, 5, 38-44) Thus he demonstrated what he will do on a much larger scale under God’s Kingdom arrangement.—John 5:28, 29.

Peace and righteousness will prevail forever: Under Christ’s rulership, lawlessness will be a thing of the past. How do we know that? Because Jesus is able to read hearts, and he will use that ability to judge between the righteous and the wicked. Those who refuse to change their wicked ways will not be allowed to live in God’s new world.—Psalm 37:9, 10; Isaiah 11:3, 4; 65:20; Matthew 9:4.

We have considered just a few of the many Bible prophecies that point to the wonderful time to come. When God’s Kingdom exercises rulership over the earth, an “abundance of peace” will prevail forever. (Psalm 37:11, 29) All the causes of pain and suffering that have plagued mankind will be undone. We have God’s own word on it: “Look! I am making all things new. . . . These words are faithful and true.”—Revelation 21:5. ■

Poor Materially but Rich Spiritually

AS TOLD BY ALEXANDER URSU

My grandfather and father lived in an unfinished house in Cotuijeni, a peasant village in the northern part of what is now Moldova. There I was born in December 1939. In the early 1930's, they had become Jehovah's Witnesses. Mother also became a Witness after acknowledging that grandfather knew the Bible better than the village priest.

When I was three, my father, my uncle, and my grandfather were deported to labor camps for their stand on Christian neutrality. Only my father survived. In 1947, after World War II, he returned home with a broken back. Although a physical wreck, he stood firm in his faith.

DRAMATIC CHANGES IN OUR LIVES

When I was nine, our family and hundreds of other Moldovan Witnesses were exiled to Siberia. On July 6, 1949, we were herded into cattle cars. After 12 days and more than 4,000 miles (6,400 km) of continuous travel, we stopped at the Lebyazhe train station. Local authorities were waiting for us. We were divided into small groups and immediately dispersed throughout the area. A small vacant school became home for our group. We were exhausted and heavyhearted. An older woman with us hummed a song composed by Witnesses during World War II. Soon all wholeheartedly joined her in singing the words:

"So many brothers were exiled far away.

They took them to the north and the east.

For doing God's work, they were sentenced to adversity, and there they endured deathlike trials."



At Dzhankoy railway station, about 1974

In time, we were able to attend Bible meetings every Sunday at a place about eight miles (13 km) from our home. Often we left early on dark winter mornings and hiked through waist-deep snow when the temperature was 40 degrees below zero Fahrenheit (-40°C). Fifty or more of us squeezed into a 200-square-foot (19 sq m) room. We began by singing a song or two or three. A heartfelt prayer was offered, and Bible questions were discussed. This continued for an hour or so. We sang more songs, and then more Bible questions were entertained. What a spiritually strengthening time that was!

NEW CHALLENGES TO FACE

By 1960, greater freedom was granted to the exiled Witnesses. Though we were poor, I was able to visit Moldova, where I met Nina, whose parents and grandparents were also Witnesses. Soon we were married and moved back to Siberia, where our daughter, Dina, was born in 1964 and our son, Viktor, in 1966. Two years later, we moved to Ukraine and lived in a small house in Dzhankoy, a city about 100 miles (160 km) from Yalta, on the Crimean peninsula.

In Crimea the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses were under ban, as they still were throughout the Soviet Union. But our work was not tightly restricted, nor were we actively persecuted. So a spirit of complacency developed among some Witnesses. They reasoned that having suffered so much in Siberia, working hard now to achieve some material comforts was appropriate.

EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS

On March 27, 1991, our activity throughout what was then known as the Soviet Union was granted legal recognition. At once, plans were made for seven 2-day special conventions for the entire country. We were to attend the one in Odessa, Ukraine, scheduled to begin August 24. I arrived a month early to help prepare the large soccer stadium for the convention.

Working long days, we often slept on stadium benches at night. Teams of Witness women cleaned the park surrounding the stadium. Some 70 tons of trash were hauled away. Those working in the rooming department scoured the city to find accommodations for the 15,000 delegates expected. Then, suddenly, shocking news!

On August 19—just five days before our convention was to begin—Mikhail Gorbachev, then president of the USSR, was arrested while on vacation near Yalta, not far from where we were. Approval for our convention was canceled. Delegates began calling the convention office, asking, "What should we do about our bus and train reservations?" After fervent prayers, those responsible for organizing the convention told them, "Come anyway!"

Preparations—and prayers—continued. The transportation department began meeting delegates who were arriving from many parts of the Soviet Union and taking them to their quarters. Each morning, members of the Convention Committee left their office to meet with city officials. Each night, they returned without positive news.

ANSWER TO OUR PRAYERS

On Thursday, August 22—two days before the scheduled opening—members of the Convention Committee returned with the good news: The convention had been approved! As we sang the opening song and joined in the opening prayer, our joy was unbounded. After the closing session on Saturday, we lingered late into the evening, talking and renewing friendships. Here



Convention in Odessa, 1991

were Christians with faith so strong that they had stood up to the most difficult tests.

During the more than 22 years following that convention, tremendous spiritual growth has taken place. Kingdom Halls have been built throughout Ukraine, and the number of Kingdom publishers has grown from 25,000 in 1991 to more than 150,000 now!

STILL RICH SPIRITUALLY

Our family still lives in the same house in Dzhankoy, now a city of about 40,000. Although there were just a few Witness families here when we arrived from Siberia in 1968, there are now six congregations in Dzhankoy.

My family has grown in number as well. There are now four generations of us still alive and serving Jehovah—our children, their children, and their children's children. ■

Four generations of my family





Did Our Languages Come From the “Tower of Babel”?

“Jehovah scattered them from there over all the surface of the earth, and they gradually left off building the city. That is why its name was called Babel, because there Jehovah had confused the language of all the earth.”—Genesis 11:8, 9.

DID that event recorded in the Bible really happen? Did people start speaking different languages all at once, as described? Some scoff at the Bible’s account of how human languages began and spread. One author claims: “The Tower of Babel myth is definitely one of the most absurd stories ever told.” Even a Jewish rabbi called it “a naive attempt to explain the origin of nations.”

Why do people reject the Babel account? Simply put, it contradicts certain theories regarding the origin of language. For example, some scholars suggest that language groups did not appear suddenly but evolved gradually from one “mother tongue.” Others believe that several original languages developed independently, advancing from simple grunts to complex speech. These and other conflicting theories have caused many

to agree with Professor W. T. Fitch, who wrote in his book *The Evolution of Language*: “We do not yet have fully convincing answers.”

What have archaeologists and researchers uncovered regarding the origin and development of human languages? Do their discoveries confirm any of the proposed theories? Or do the findings support the Babel account? First let us take a closer look at that Bible account.

WHERE AND WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?

The Bible states that the confusion of language and dispersion of the people took place “in the land of Shinar,” later called Babylonia. (Genesis 11:2) When did that happen? “The earth [“earth’s population,” footnote] was divided,” says the Bible, in the days of Peleg, who was born about 250 years before Abraham. So the events

of Babel evidently took place some 4,200 years ago.—Genesis 10:25; 11:18-26.

Some scholars theorize that modern languages stem from one original language—the so-called mother tongue that they thought humans spoke nearly 100,000 years ago.* Others claim that today’s languages are related to several root languages spoken at least 6,000 years ago. But how do linguists reconstruct the development of extinct languages? “That is tricky,” says the *Economist* magazine. “Unlike biologists, linguists do not have fossils to guide them through the past.” The magazine adds that one evolutionary linguist arrives at his conclusions by “mathematically informed guesswork.”

Nevertheless, “linguistic fossils” do exist. What are these fossils, and what do they reveal regarding the origin of human languages? *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* explains: “The earliest records of written language, the only linguistic fossils man can hope to have, go back no more than about 4,000 or 5,000 years.” Where did archaeologists discover these “linguistic fossils,” or “records of written language”? In lower Mesopotamia—the site of ancient Shinar.[#] Hence, the available physical evidence is in agreement with the facts stated in the Bible.

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, DIFFERENT THINKING

The Bible account says that at Babel, God acted to “confuse their language that they may not listen to [“understand,” footnote] one another’s language.” (Genesis 11:7) As a result,

* Theories about language usually presuppose that humans evolved from apelike creatures. For a consideration of such claims, see pages 27-29 of the brochure *The Origin of Life—Five Questions Worth Asking*, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

[#] Archaeologists have unearthed several pyramidlike, stepped temple-towers in the vicinity of Shinar. The Bible says that the tower builders at Babel laid bricks, not stone, and used bitumen as mortar. (Genesis 11:3, 4) In Mesopotamia, stone was “rare or even entirely absent,” says *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, while bitumen was plentiful.

A clay tablet with cuneiform writing, from Mesopotamia, third millennium B.C.E.

Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY



the workers “left off building the city” of Babel and were scattered “over all the surface of the earth.” (Genesis 11:8, 9) Thus, the Bible does not say that all modern languages can be traced to a single “mother tongue.” Rather, it describes the sudden appearance of several apparently fully developed new languages, each capable of expressing the range of human feeling and thought and each different and distinct from the others.

What about the language groups of the world today? Are they fundamentally similar or different? Cognitive scientist Lera Boroditsky wrote: “As linguists probed deeper into the world’s languages (7,000 or so, only a fraction of them analyzed), innumerable unpredictable differences emerged.” Yes, although tongues and dialects of one language family, such as Cantonese and Hakka in southern China, may be similar to one another, they are fundamentally different from those of *another* language family, say West Catalan or Valencian in Spain.

Languages shape the way people think about and describe the world around them—color, quantity, location, direction. For example, in one language a person says, “There is a bug on your *right* hand.” But in another language, one would say, “There is a bug on your *southwest* hand.” Such differences would be confusing, to say the

LEGENDS THAT ECHO THE BIBLE'S ACCOUNT

“Once upon a time all the people lived in one large village and spoke one tongue,” according to a story told by a hill tribe in Myanmar. While building a great tower, the builders “gradually acquired different manners, customs, and ways of speech, [eventually] being scattered all over the land.” Similar legends are found among indigenous peoples of Africa, East Asia, Mexico, and elsewhere.

If the Babel account had been an invention by Moses, the Hebrew writer of Genesis, would it have cropped up in the legends of such far-flung national and language groups? That is very unlikely. Thus, the existence of such diverse legends and tales testifies to the credibility of the Babel account in the Bible.

least. No wonder the builders at Babel found it impossible to continue their project.

GRUNTS OR COMPLEX SPEECH?

What was mankind's original language like? The Bible reports that the first man, Adam, was able to coin new words when he named all the animals and flying creatures. (Genesis 2:20) Adam also composed poetry to express his feelings for his wife, and she clearly described what God had commanded and the consequences of disobeying Him. (Genesis 2:23; 3:1-3) The first language, then, enabled humans to communicate fully and to express themselves creatively.

The confusion of languages at Babel hindered mankind's ability to combine their intellectual and physical powers. Yet, their new languages, like the first language, were complex. Within a few centuries, men built bustling cities, assembled powerful armies, and engaged in international trade. (Genesis 13:12; 14:1-11; 37:25) Could they have made such progress without the use of an extensive vocabulary and grammar? According to the Bible, the original human tongue and the tongues introduced at Babel were, not primitive grunts and growls, but complex languages.

Modern research supports this conclusion. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* states: “Every culture which has been investigated, no matter how ‘primitive’ it may be in cultural terms, turns out to have a fully developed language, with a complexity comparable to those of the so-called ‘civilized’ nations.” Similarly, in his book *The Language Instinct*, Harvard College Professor Steven Pinker states: “There is no such thing as a Stone Age language.”

THE FUTURE OF LANGUAGE

After reviewing the age and location of linguistic “fossils,” the fundamental differences be-

tween language groups, and the complexity of ancient languages, what reasonable conclusion could we draw? Many conclude that the Bible's account of what took place at Babel is a fully credible explanation.

The Bible tells us that Jehovah God confused the people's language at Babel because they rebelled against him. (Genesis 11:4-7) However, he promised that he would “give to peoples the change to a pure language, in order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah, in order to serve him shoulder to shoulder.” (Zephaniah 3:9) This “pure language,” the truth from God's Word, draws together a people from around the world today. It seems logical that in the future God would unite mankind further by giving them one common language, undoing the confusion at Babel. ■

“God Loves a Cheerful Giver”

What kind of gift would make you feel truly appreciative? No doubt most of us would be happy to receive a gift from a giver who is motivated by love rather than by a sense of duty or obligation. When it comes to giving, motive matters. It matters to us. And more important, it matters to God. Consider the inspired words of the apostle Paul recorded at **2 Corinthians 9:7**.

Why did Paul write those words? He wanted to encourage the Corinthian Christians to support the relief work for their needy fellow believers in Judea. Did he try to force the Corinthians to give? On the contrary, he wrote: “Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” Let us take a closer look at that admonition.

“Just as he has resolved in his heart.” A genuine Christian gives because he has decided “in his heart” to do so, notes Paul. At the same time, a Christian devotes more than passing attention to the needs of his fellow worshippers. The original-language word rendered “resolved” “has the idea of predetermination,” says one scholar. So a Christian ponders the needs of fellow believers and asks himself what he can do to fill those needs.—1 John 3:17.

“Not grudgingly or under compulsion.” Paul notes two types of giving that have no place among true Christians—reluctant and forced. The Greek expression rendered “grudgingly” literally means “out of sadness (or, grief).” A grudging, or reluctant, giver gives “from a heart made sorrowful at the thought of parting with money,” explains one reference work. A forced giver gives because he feels pressured to do so. Who of us

really wants to receive a gift from a reluctant or forced giver?

“God loves a cheerful giver.” Once a Christian decides to give, he should do so cheerfully, or with joy, says Paul. Indeed, happiness is a by-product of giving that is properly motivated. (Acts 20:35) The cheerful giver can hardly hide his joy. In fact, the term “cheerful” could very well describe both the inward feeling and the outward expression of the giver. A cheerful giver touches our heart. He also warms God’s heart. Another

“God loves people who love to give”

translation says: “God loves people who love to give.”—*Contemporary English Version*.

The inspired words of the apostle Paul are a guiding principle for Christian giving. Whether we are giving of our time, energy, or material possessions, let us do so of our own free will and because we find genuine pleasure in being generous to others, especially those in need. Such giving will not only make us happy but also endear us to God, for he “loves a cheerful giver.” ■

SUGGESTED BIBLE READING FOR SEPTEMBER
1 and 2 Corinthians



God Can Feel Hurt

HOW WE CAN BRING HIM JOY

Have you ever been hurt so badly that you cried?—* All of us probably have. At times, though, the pain may not be to our body. Someone may say bad things about us that are not true. **That can hurt, can't it?**— God too can feel hurt when lies are told about him. Let's talk about this and see how we can bring God joy rather than pain.

The Bible says that some people who said they loved God made “*him feel hurt.*” Yes, “*they pained*” God! No one, of course, can hurt the body of Jehovah God. He is almighty. Let's see, then, why Jehovah feels hurt when we don't do what he says.

The first two people Jehovah created on earth caused him to feel a lot of pain. These two were put in the Paradise on earth called “the garden of Eden.” **Who were these two?**— Yes, Adam and then, sometime later, Eve. Let's see what they did that caused Jehovah pain.

After Jehovah put them in that garden, he told them to take care of it. He also told them that they could have children and could live together in the garden without dying. But before Adam and Eve had children, a terrible thing happened. **Do you know what that was?**— An angel moved Eve and then Adam to rebel against Jehovah. Let's see how this happened.

The angel caused a snake, or serpent, to *appear* to speak. Eve liked what she heard—the serpent said she would become “like God.” So she did what the serpent told her to do. **Do you know what that was?**—

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

Eve ate from the tree that Jehovah had told Adam they should not eat from. Before God created Eve, he had told Adam: “From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die.”

Eve knew that law. However, she kept looking at that tree, and she saw that it “was good for food and that it was something to be longed for to the eyes . . . So she began taking of its fruit and eating it.” Later she gave the fruit to Adam, and “he began eating it.” **Why, do you think, did he do that?**— It was because Adam had come to love Eve more than he loved Jehovah. He chose to please her rather than to please God. But obeying Jehovah is more important than obeying *anyone* else!

Do you remember the snake, or serpent, that spoke to Eve? Just as a person can make a puppet *appear* to speak, someone made that snake appear to speak. **Whose voice was coming from the serpent?**— It was the voice of “the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan.”

Do you know how you can make Jehovah happy?— You can do so by always trying to please him. Satan says he can get everyone to do what he wants them to do. So Jehovah urges us: “Be wise, my son [or daughter], and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me.” Satan taunts, or mocks, Jehovah. He says that he can turn *everyone* away from serving Him. So make Jehovah happy by obeying him and serving him! **Will you try hard to do that?**—■



READ IN YOUR BIBLE

Psalms 78:40, 41

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-17; 3:1-6

Revelation 12:9; Proverbs 27:11

How can marriage be happy?

The Bible's advice on building a happy marriage works because it comes from the Originator of marriage, Jehovah God. It teaches us to build personal qualities that can make marriage happy and warns about attitudes that can ruin marriage. It also teaches communication skills that enhance happiness in marriage.—**Read Colossians 3:8-10, 12-14.**

Husbands and wives should honor and respect each other. When both accept the roles that God has assigned them in marriage, they can be happy.—**Read Colossians 3:18, 19.**

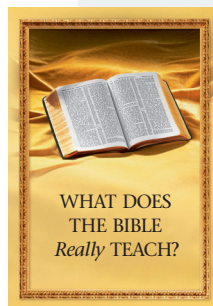
What makes a marriage last?

Married couples can stay together if they love each other. God teaches us how to love. He and his Son, Jesus, are perfect examples of self-sacrificing love.—**Read 1 John 4:7, 8, 19.**

When husbands and wives respect marriage as an arrangement by God, they will stay together. God created marriage to be a permanent union between a man and a woman so that families would be secure. Marriage can last because God made men and women to complement each other physically and emotionally. He also made them in his image, with the ability to imitate his love.—**Read Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 24.**



What kind of communication promotes happiness in marriage?



For more information, see chapter 14 of this book, published by Jehovah's Witnesses
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