

JANUARY 1, 2015

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



A GOVERNMENT
FREE OF CORRUPTION

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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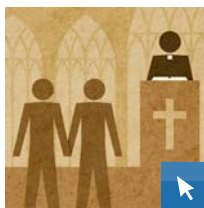
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The Poison of Government Corruption

Government corruption has been defined as the abuse of public power for private gain. Such abuse has a long history. For example, the Bible includes a law prohibiting bribery in judicial cases, showing that the practice was already well-known over 3,500 years ago. (Exodus 23:8) Of course, corruption involves more than just accepting bribes. Corrupt public officials sometimes appropriate goods, take advantage of services to which they are not entitled, or even steal funds outright. They may also use their position to favor their friends and relatives unfairly.

While corruption can exist in any human organization, it seems that corruption in government is the worst. The 2013 *Global Corruption Barometer*, published by Transparency International, reported that people worldwide have the perception that the five most corrupt institutions are political parties, the police, public officials, the legislature, and the judiciary. Consider just some reports that highlight the problem.

● **AFRICA:** In 2013, some 22,000 public officials in South Africa were charged with misconduct for corrupt activities.

● **AMERICAS:** In 2012, in Brazil, 25 people were convicted of using public funds to buy political support. Among those convicted was the former president's chief of staff, the second most powerful man in the country.

● **ASIA:** In Seoul, South Korea, 502 people died in a department-store collapse in 1995. Investigators found that city officials had been bribed to allow contractors to use substandard concrete and to violate safety rules.

● **EUROPE:** "The extent of the problem [corruption in Europe] is breathtaking," according to European Commission Home Affairs Commissioner Cecilia Malmström. She added that "the political commitment to really root out corruption seems to be missing."

Government corruption has deep roots. Professor Susan Rose-Ackerman, an expert on the subject of anticorruption, wrote that reform would require "fundamental changes in the way government does business." While the situation might seem to be hopeless, the Bible shows that even greater changes are not only possible but also certain to happen.





GOD'S KINGDOM

A Government With No Corruption

“At the end of the day, public officials are still citizens and we are all a product of society.” So stated the chief auditor of Nicaragua when explaining why he felt that government corruption was impossible to eliminate.

Would you not agree that if human society is corrupt, then any government that is a part of it will inevitably be corrupt? If that is the case, then a government free of corruption must come from outside human society. The Bible describes just such a government—God’s Kingdom, the government for which Jesus taught his followers to pray. —Matthew 6:9, 10.

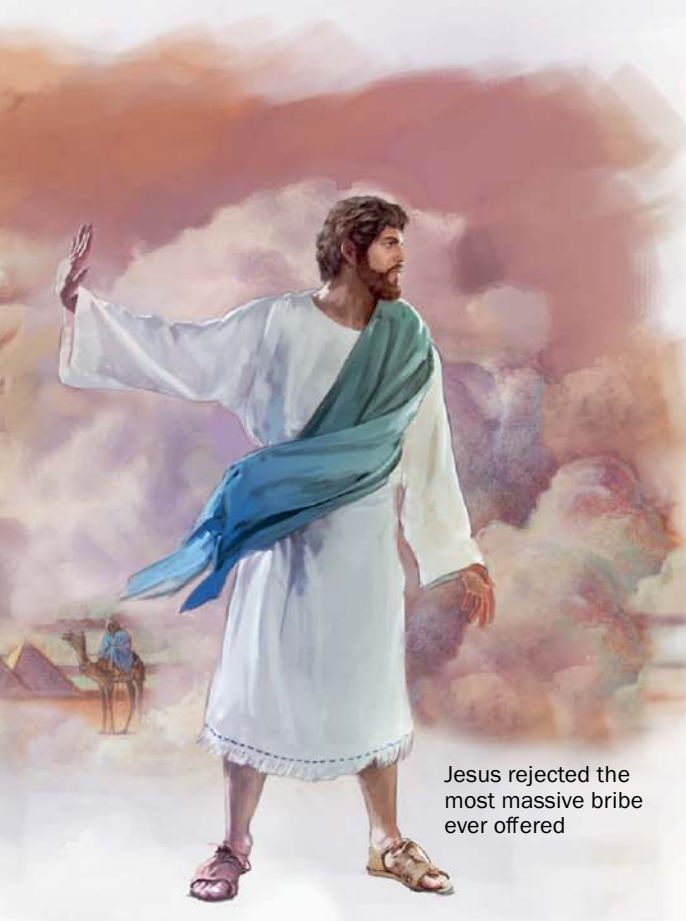
God’s Kingdom is a real government that rules from heaven. It will replace all human governments. (Psalm 2:8, 9; Revelation 16:14; 19:19-21) Among the blessings that the Kingdom will bring to mankind is the elimination of government corruption. Consider six features of the Kingdom that guarantee this.

1. POWER

THE PROBLEM: Human governments are funded by their citizens, most often through taxes and duties. This flow of money tempts some officials to steal, while others accept bribes from individuals who want them to reduce their taxes or other payments due the government. A vicious circle may result—the government raises taxes to make up for such losses, and this in turn fosters more corruption. In an environment like that, people who are honest may suffer the most.

THE SOLUTION: God’s Kingdom receives its power from the almighty God, Jehovah.* (Revelation 11:15) It does not need to collect taxes to pay

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



righteous man on earth who always does good.”
—Ecclesiastes 7:20.

THE SOLUTION: Unlike imperfect humans, Jesus Christ, whom God has selected to be Ruler of the Kingdom, cannot be tempted into doing what is wrong. Jesus showed this by rejecting the most massive bribe ever offered—“all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.” Jesus was promised this in exchange for one act of false worship to the ruler of the world, the Devil. (Matthew 4:8-10; John 14:30) Even when Jesus was being tortured to death, he was so determined to maintain his integrity that he refused a drug that would have dulled the pain but might also have left him without full command of his senses. (Matthew 27:34) Now raised back to heavenly life by God, Jesus has proved that he is fully qualified to rule over the Kingdom.—Philippians 2:8-11.

3. STABILITY

THE PROBLEM: Many countries hold elections regularly, which in theory allows people to vote corrupt officials out of office. The reality, though, is that campaigns and elections are prone to corruption, even in so-called developed countries. By means of campaign contributions and other actions, the rich can unduly influence current and future officeholders.

Justice John Paul Stevens of the U.S. Supreme Court wrote that such influence threatens “not only the legitimacy and quality of Government but also the public’s faith therein.” It is little wonder, then, that many people worldwide have the perception that political parties are the most corrupt of all institutions.

THE SOLUTION: God’s Kingdom removes the possibility of campaign or electoral fraud by being a stable, permanent rulership. (Daniel 7:13, 14) Since its Ruler is chosen by God, the Kingdom is neither validated by elections nor subject to overthrow. Its stability helps to ensure that the

for its operation. Instead, God’s “awe-inspiring power” and his unselfish generosity ensure that the Kingdom will abundantly provide for the needs of all its subjects.—Isaiah 40:26; Psalm 145:16.

2. RULER

THE PROBLEM: The effort to eliminate corruption “must start at the top,” observes Susan Rose-Ackerman, quoted in the preceding article. Governments lose credibility when they try to eradicate corruption among police or customs officers while tolerating it among high officials. And even the most ethical human ruler is subject to inherent imperfection. As the Bible says, “there is no



God's Kingdom is a
real government that
rules from heaven

actions it takes are always in the best long-term interests of its people.

4. LAWS

THE PROBLEM: At first, you might think that enacting new laws could improve matters. However, experts have found that in many cases, increasing the number of laws just provides more opportunities for corruption. Additionally, legislation specifically intended to reduce corruption often costs much to implement yet accomplishes little.

THE SOLUTION: The laws of the Kingdom of God are vastly superior to those of human governments. For example, rather than itemizing an extensive list of dos and don'ts, Jesus gave what is often called the Golden Rule. He stated: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must do to them." (Matthew 7:12) Perhaps more significantly, the laws of the Kingdom focus on both motives and actions. "You must love your neighbor as yourself," said Jesus. (Matthew 22:39) Of course, God, who can read the heart, could actually enforce such commands. —1 Samuel 16:7.

5. MOTIVES

THE PROBLEM: The driving forces behind corruption are greed and self-interest. Government officials and citizens often display those negative qualities. In the department-store collapse in Seoul mentioned in the preceding article, government officials accepted bribes from contractors who knew that paying a bribe would be less costly than using proper building materials and construction practices.

To eliminate corruption, then, people must be taught how to overcome entrenched motives such as greed and selfishness. However, human governments lack both the will and the ability to implement this type of educational program.

THE SOLUTION: God's Kingdom deals with corruption at its roots by teaching people how to overcome the wrong motives that cause it.* This education helps them "to be made new in [their] dominant mental attitude." (Ephesians 4:23) They learn to replace greed and selfishness with contentment and interest in others.—Philippians 2:4; 1 Timothy 6:6.

6. SUBJECTS

THE PROBLEM: Even in the best environment and with the finest education in morals, some people will choose to be dishonest and corrupt. Experts admit that this is why human governments cannot eliminate corruption. The most that can be hoped for is that the scope and destructive effects of corruption can be limited.

THE SOLUTION: The United Nations Convention Against Corruption states that to fight corruption, governments should promote "integrity, honesty and responsibility." While this is a noble goal, God's Kingdom does more than just *promote* these qualities—it *requires* them of its subjects. The Bible says that "greedy people" and "liars"

* For example, see the article "Is It Possible to Be Honest in a Corrupt World?" in the October 1, 2012, issue of *The Watchtower*.

will not qualify to inherit the Kingdom.—1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Revelation 21:8.

People can learn to adhere to these high moral standards, as the early Christians proved. For example, when a disciple named Simon tried to buy a spiritual favor from the apostles, they refused the bribe and told him: "Repent of this badness of yours." Once Simon saw the danger of his wrong desire, he asked the apostles to pray in his behalf so that he could overcome it.—Acts 8:18-24.

HOW TO BECOME A SUBJECT OF THE KINGDOM

Regardless of your nationality, you have the opportunity to become a subject of God's Kingdom. (Acts 10:34, 35) The program of education offered by the Kingdom—which is available around the world right now—will show you how. Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to demonstrate their free home Bible study arrangement, which can take as little as ten minutes a week. Among other things, you can learn more about "the good news of the Kingdom of God," including how it will eliminate government corruption. (Luke 4:43) We invite you to contact the Witnesses in your area or to visit our Web site, jw.org. ■

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have a free home
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AS TOLD BY MAYLI GÜNDEL

YEAR BORN

1987

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

AZERBAIJAN

HISTORY

MUSLIM FATHER AND
JEWISH MOTHER



Bible truth satisfied my thirst for answers

MY PAST: I was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, as the second of two children. My father was Muslim, and my mother was Jewish. My parents loved each other and accepted their differing beliefs. Mom supported Dad when he fasted during Ramadan, and Dad supported Mom when she observed the Passover. In our home we had the Koran, the Torah, and the Bible.

I considered myself a Muslim. Although I never questioned God's existence, there were issues that puzzled me. I wondered, 'Why did God create humans, and for what useful purpose would someone suffer his entire life only to be tormented forever in hell?' Since people said that everything that happens is God's will, I wondered, 'Is God just a puppeteer who enjoys watching people suffer?'

When I was 12 years old, I started to pray namaz, the Muslim's five daily ceremonial prayers. About that time, Father sent my sister and me to a Jewish school. Among other subjects, we were taught Torah traditions and the Hebrew language. Before daily classroom lessons, we had to pray according to Jewish tradition. Thus, in the morning, I prayed namaz at home, and later in the day, I joined Jewish prayers in school.

I desperately hungered for logical answers to my questions. I repeatedly asked the rabbis at school: "Why did God create humans? How does God view my Muslim father? He is a good man, so why is he considered unclean? Why did God create him?" The few answers I received were irrational and unconvincing.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: My faith in God was shattered in 2002. We had just immigrated to Germany when, only a week later, my father suffered a stroke and fell into a coma. For years I had prayed for the health

and well-being of my family. Convinced that the Almighty alone has power over life and death, I pleaded every day for the life of my dad. I thought, 'It is a small thing for God to fulfill a little girl's heartfelt wish.' I was sure he would grant my entreaties. But my father died.

Aghast at God's seeming indifference, I was devastated. 'Either I am praying the wrong way,' I reasoned, 'or God does not exist.' I was stunned and unable to pray namaz anymore. Other religions did not make sense to me, so I concluded that there is no God.

Six months later, Jehovah's Witnesses called at our door. Since we did not think highly of Christianity, my sister and I wanted to show them politely that they were wrong. We asked them: "How can Christians worship Jesus, the cross, Mary, and other idols when that is against the Ten Commandments?" From the Scriptures the Witnesses showed us convincing proof that idol worship is forbidden for true Christians and that prayers should be directed exclusively to God. That astonished me.

Then we asked: "What about the Trinity? If Jesus is God, how could he live on earth and be killed by humans?" Again, they answered with the Bible and explained that Jesus is neither God nor equal to Him. The Witnesses explained that for this reason, they do not believe in the Trinity. I was astounded and thought, 'These are really strange Christians.'

Still, I wanted to know why people die and why God allows suffering. The Witnesses showed me the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*,* which contained entire chapters that addressed my questions. They immediately started a Bible study with me.

During each study session, I found sensible, Bible-based answers to my questions. I came to know that God's name is Jehovah. (Psalm 83:

18) His main quality is unselfish love. (1 John 4:8) He created humans because he wanted to share the gift of life. I came to understand that although God permits injustice, he detests it and will soon remove it forever. I learned that the rebellion of Adam and Eve has been detrimental to mankind. (Romans 5:12) Among the sad consequences is the death of beloved ones, such as my father. However, God will undo such tragedies in a coming new world, where those who have died will return to life.—Acts 24:15.

Bible truth satisfied my thirst for answers. I started to believe in God again. As I got to know Jehovah's Witnesses better, I realized that they are a worldwide brotherhood. The unity and love among them impressed me. (John 13:34, 35) What I learned about Jehovah moved me to want to serve him, so I decided to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I was baptized on January 8, 2005.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: The Bible's convincing logic changed my whole outlook on life for the better. The credible explanations I found through God's Word bring me inner peace. I draw great joy and comfort from the hope of seeing my father again through the resurrection promised in God's Word.—John 5:28, 29.

For six years I have been happily married to my God-fearing husband, Jonathan. We have both learned that the truth about God is logical and simple, yet at the same time a priceless treasure. That is why we appreciate sharing our faith and our wonderful hope with others. Today I know that Jehovah's Witnesses are not "strange" but are true Christians. ■



* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses but now out of print.

Husbands

Make Your Home Secure



WHAT kind of security should a man provide for his wife? Many people are raised to believe that a husband's primary goal is to help his family to be financially secure. However, some wives who have plenty of material things still feel *emotionally* insecure—even terrified. A Spanish woman named Rosa, for example, says about the man she married, "With outsiders he was a likable man, but at home he was a rough husband." Joy, who is from Nigeria, admits, "When I didn't agree with my husband, he would say, 'You have to do everything I say because I am your husband.'"

How can a man fulfill his role as a husband in a loving way? What does it take for a husband to make his home secure, "a resting-place" for his wife?—Ruth 1:9, footnote.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT A HUSBAND'S AUTHORITY

Although husband and wife have an equal standing in God's eyes, the Bible says that each spouse has a distinct role in the family. Romans 7:2 states that a married woman comes under "the law of her husband." Just as many institutions appoint a head to oversee their affairs, God has appointed the husband to be head of his wife. (1 Corinthians 11:3) Husbands should take the lead in their household.

As husbands, how should you exercise your God-given authority? "Continue loving your wives," the Bible says, "just as the Christ also loved the congregation." (Ephesians 5:25) Yes, although he never married, Jesus Christ's example can help you to become a good husband. Let us see how.

JESUS' LIFE—A PERFECT MODEL FOR HUSBANDS

Jesus sought to refresh others and lighten their load. Jesus promised all who were oppressed and weighed down by personal problems: "Come to me, . . . and I will refresh you." (Matthew 11:28, 29) He often alleviated their physical suffering and provided refreshing spiritual help. No wonder many felt drawn to Jesus, convinced that he would lighten their load!



Reflecting on Jesus' example can help a man become a better husband and father



How husbands can imitate Jesus. Look for ways to lighten your wife's load. Some wives feel as did Rosa, who lamented: "I was nothing more than my husband's maid-servant." In contrast, a man named Kweku, who has a good marriage, says: "I often ask my wife how I can share the load. Because I love her, I often take the initiative to help her with household chores."

Jesus was considerate and empathetic. For 12 years, a poor woman had suffered from a grievous health problem. On hearing about Jesus' miraculous power, "she kept saying: 'If I touch just his outer garments, I will get well.'" She was right. She approached Jesus, touched the fringes of his garment, and was cured at once. Though some observers likely concluded that this woman acted presumptuously, Jesus perceived that she was desperate.* He kindly told

* According to the Mosaic Law, this woman's condition made her religiously impure, and thus anyone she touched would have been reckoned unclean.—Leviticus 15:19, 25.



her: “Daughter, . . . be healed from your grievous sickness.” Not only did he avoid embarrassing or rebuking her but he acknowledged her illness. He thus showed what kind of man he was—a man of empathy.—Mark 5:25-34.

How husbands can imitate Jesus. When your wife does not feel well, show her extra consideration and be patient. Try to relate to her and understand her reactions. Ricardo, for example, explains, “When I notice that my wife is extra sensitive, I make a special effort to avoid saying things that could make her feel worse.”

Jesus communicated with his disciples. Jesus talked extensively to his friends. “I have made known to you all the things I have heard from my Father,” he said. (John 15:15) It is true that Jesus sometimes wanted to be alone with his thoughts and to pray. But he often shared his innermost feelings with his disciples. The night before he was put to death as a condemned criminal, he frankly told them that he was “deeply grieved.” (Matthew 26:38) Even when their actions disappointed him, Jesus never stopped talking to his friends.—Matthew 26:40, 41.

How husbands can imitate Jesus. Communicate—from your mind and heart—with your wife. A woman may complain that her husband seems to have no trouble speaking in public but keeps silent at home. On the other hand, note how Ana feels when her husband opens up to her. “I sense that he really loves me,” she says, “and I feel close to him.”

Refuse to use silence as a weapon to punish your wife. “When my husband was upset with me,” says one woman, “he refused to talk to me for days. He made me feel guilty and despised.” Edwin, however, tries to imitate Jesus’ example. “When I get annoyed, I don’t respond right away, but I look for the right moment for us to talk things out.”

Joy, quoted at the outset, has seen changes in her husband since he began studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. Joy relates, “He has improved and is trying hard to be a more loving husband in imitation of Jesus.” Millions of married couples are benefiting from the same Bible instruction. Would you like to join them? You can ask one of Jehovah’s Witnesses for a free Bible study. ■





DETAIL OF AN ASSYRIAN RELIEF
OF A EUNUCH

© The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Image source: Art Resource, NY

As used in the Bible, what does the term “eunuch” mean?

At times, the word may refer to a man who was castrated. In Bible times, some men were castrated as punishment or on being captured or enslaved. Trusted men who had been castrated oversaw the women’s quarters, or harems, in royal households. For example, the eunuchs Hegai and Shaashgaz served as guardians of the wives and concubines of Persian King Ahasuerus, who is thought to be Xerxes I.—Esther 2:3, 14.

However, not all whom the Bible calls eunuchs were actually castrated. Some scholars say that the term was also used in a broader sense to refer to an official assigned to duties in the court of the king. This appears to be the sense in which the term is applied to Ebed-melech, the associate of Jeremiah, and to the unnamed Ethiopian to whom the evangelizer Philip preached. Ebed-melech evidently was a high-ranking official, for he had direct access to King Zedekiah. (Jeremiah 38:7, 8) And the Ethiopian is described as a royal treasurer who “had gone to Jerusalem to worship.”—Acts 8:27. ■

Why did shepherds in Bible times separate sheep from goats?

When describing a future time of judgment, Jesus said: “When the Son of man comes in his glory, . . . he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” (Matthew 25:31, 32) Why would literal shepherds separate these animals?

Normally, sheep and goats were herded and allowed to graze together during the day. At night they would be gathered into enclosures that protected them from wild animals, thieves, and the cold. (Genesis 30:32, 33; 31:38-40) The two types of animals would be placed in separate enclosures to protect the relatively docile sheep, particularly the ewes and the lambs, from harm that could be inflicted on them by the more aggressive goats. The shepherd also separated the sheep from the goats when “breeding, milking, and shearing,” says the book *All Things in the Bible*. Jesus’ illustration thus drew on practices and imagery that would be familiar to listeners in a pastoral environment like that of ancient Israel. ■



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Should We Pray to Jesus?

A RESEARCHER recently polled over 800 youths from more than a dozen religious denominations, asking whether they believed that Jesus answers prayers. Over 60 percent said that they firmly believe that he does. However, one youth crossed out the name Jesus on the survey and wrote “God” instead.

What do you think? Should we address our prayers to Jesus or to God?*

 To find the answer, first let us consider how Jesus taught his disciples to pray.

TO WHOM DID JESUS TEACH US TO PRAY?

Jesus both **taught** and **showed** us to whom we should pray.

HIS TEACHING: When one of his disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us how to pray,” Jesus replied: “Whenever you pray, say: ‘Father.’” (Luke 11:1, 2) Further, in his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus urged his listeners to pray. He said: “Pray to your Father.” He also reassured them by saying: “Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.” (Matthew 6:6, 8) On his final night as a human, Jesus told his disciples: “If you ask the Father for anything, he will give it to you in my name.” (John 16:23) Jesus thus taught us to pray to the one who is both his Father and our Father, Jehovah God.—John 20:17.

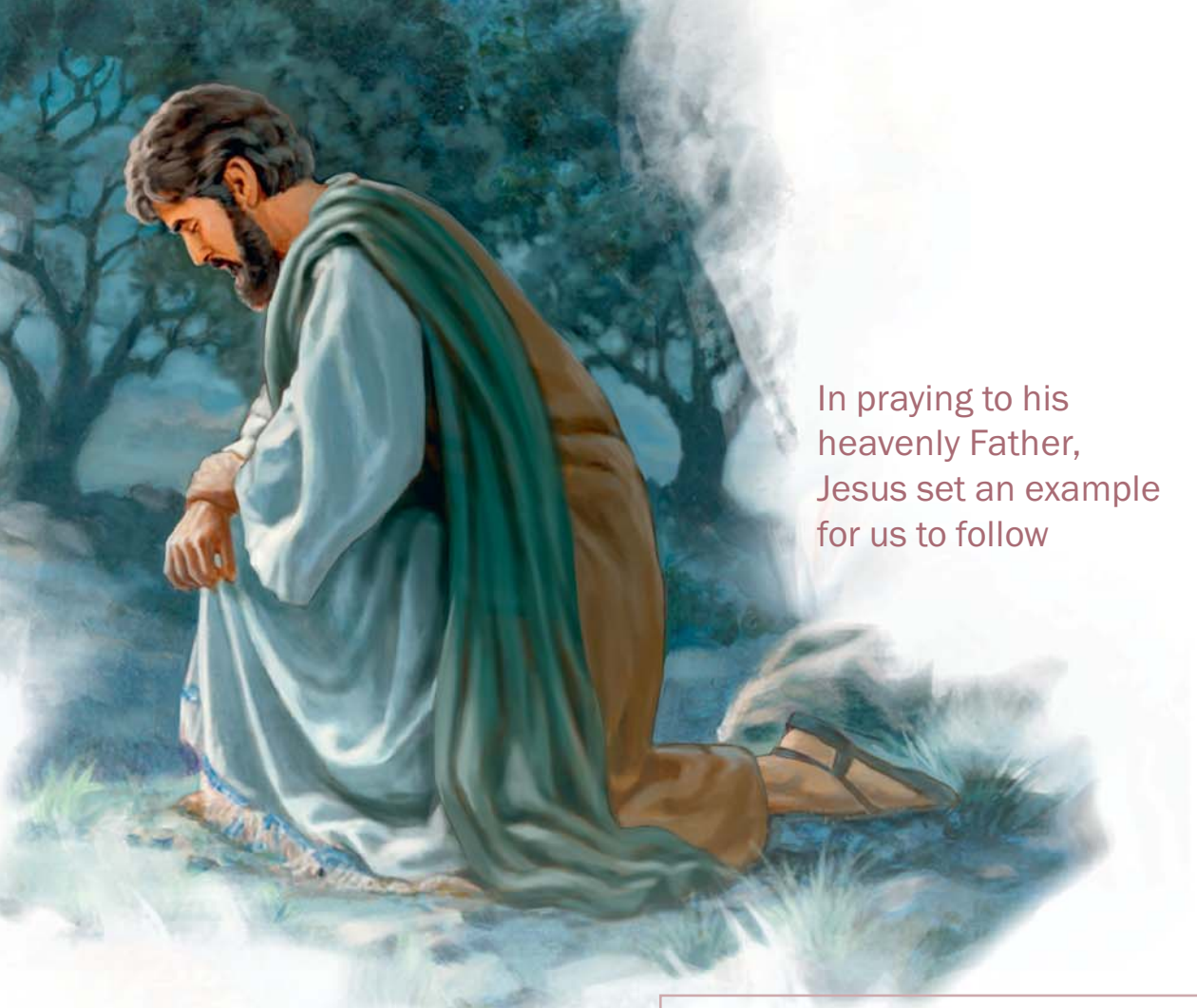
* According to the Scriptures, God and Jesus are not equal. For more information, see chapter 4 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Also available at www.jw.org.

HIS EXAMPLE: In line with the way he taught others to pray, Jesus personally prayed: “I publicly praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.” (Luke 10:21) On another occasion, “Jesus raised his eyes heavenward and said: ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me.’” (John 11:41) And as he was dying, Jesus prayed: “Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit.” (Luke 23:46) In praying to his heavenly Father—the “Lord of heaven and earth”—Jesus set a clear example for all to follow. (Matthew 11:25; 26:41, 42; 1 John 2:6) Is that how Jesus’ early disciples understood his instructions?

TO WHOM DID THE EARLY CHRISTIANS PRAY?

Within weeks of Jesus’ return to heaven, his disciples were being harassed and threatened by their opposers. (Acts 4:18) Of course, they reached out in prayer—but to whom did they turn? “They raised their voices with one accord to God,” praying that he would continue helping them “through the name of [his] holy servant Jesus.” (Acts 4:24, 30) So the disciples followed Jesus’ guidelines on prayer. They prayed to God, not to Jesus.

Years later, the apostle Paul described the manner in which he and his associates prayed. Writing to fellow Christians, he said: “We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.” (Colossians 1:3) Paul also wrote to his fellow believers about “always giving thanks to our God and Father for everything in



In praying to his heavenly Father, Jesus set an example for us to follow

the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 5: 20) From these words, we see that Paul encouraged others to pray to his “God and Father for everything”—but, of course, in Jesus’ name.—Colossians 3:17.

Like the early Christians, we can show our love for Jesus by heeding his advice on prayer. (John 14:15) As we pray to our heavenly Father—and to him alone—the words of Psalm 116:1, 2 will become ever more meaningful to us: “I love Jehovah because he hears my voice . . . I will call on him as long as I live.”* ■

* In order for our prayers to be acceptable to God, we must sincerely endeavor to live up to his requirements. For more information, see chapter 17 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

Did They Pray to Jesus?

The Bible records a few occasions when faithful humans spoke to the heavenly Jesus—and sometimes to angels. (Acts 9: 4, 5, 10-16; 10:3, 4; Revelation 10:8, 9; 22:20) But were those men *praying* to these heavenly creatures? No. In all such instances, the heavenly creatures initiated the communication. Faithful men and women reserved prayer for God alone. —Philippians 4:6.

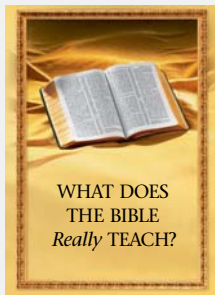


What moves many people to consider the existence of a Creator?

Some 3,000 years ago, a poet wrote: “In an awe-inspiring way I am wonderfully made.” (Psalm 139:14) When you consider how a baby develops from a single cell, does it not fill you with awe? Many people credit the design of living things to a Creator.—**Read Psalm 139:13-17; Hebrews 3:4.**

The One who created the universe and made the earth inhabitable also created life. (Psalm 36:9) He has communicated with mankind and told us about himself.—**Read Isaiah 45:18.**

IS LIFE NOT MIRACULOUS?



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

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Did we originate from animals?

In many details, our bodies are similar to those of animals. But this is because humans and animals were both designed by the Creator to live on earth. He made the first human, not from an animal, but from the ground.—**Read Genesis 1:24; 2:7.**

Humans differ from animals in two important ways. First, humans are capable of knowing, loving, and respecting the Creator. Second, whereas animals were *not* designed to live forever, humans were. But now, all people inherit death because the first man rejected the Creator's guidance.—**Read Genesis 1:27; 2:15-17.**

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BIBLE QUESTIONS ONLINE

