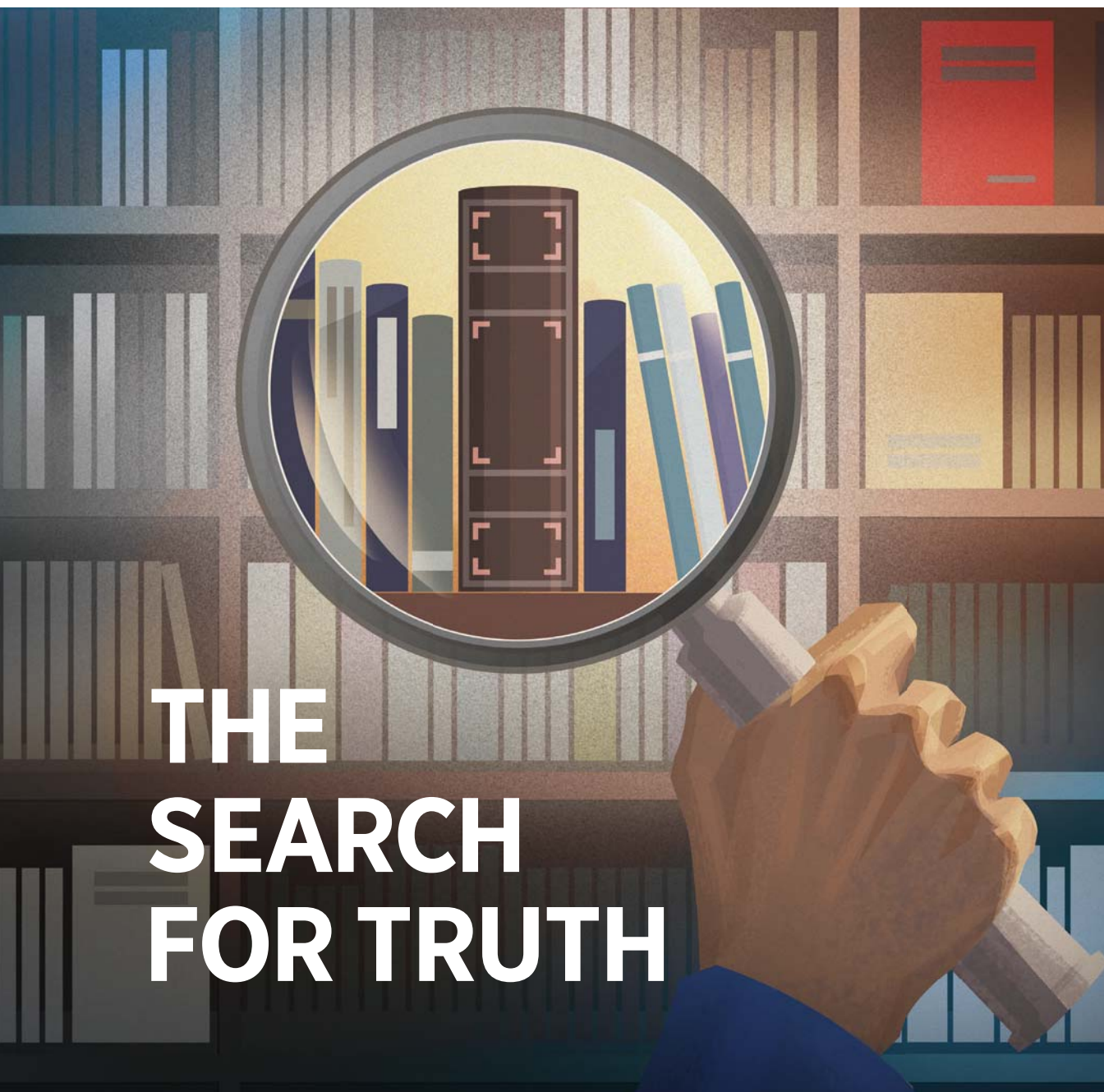


THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



THE
SEARCH
FOR TRUTH

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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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The Search for Truth

Knowing the truth can be a matter of life and death. For example, consider how our lives have been affected by the answer to the following question, How do infectious diseases spread?

For thousands of years, no one really knew the answer to that question. Meanwhile, plagues and epidemics took millions of lives. Eventually, scientists learned the truth. They discovered that diseases were often caused by germs—microorganisms, such as bacteria or viruses. Finding out that one truth has helped people prevent and treat many diseases, which has led to billions of people living longer and healthier lives.

What about other important questions? How do you think the search for truth about the following questions could affect you?

Who is God?

Who is Jesus Christ?

What is the Kingdom of God?

What does the future hold?

Millions of people have found the answers to those questions and have improved the quality of their life. You too can benefit from the answers.



CAN YOU FIND TRUTH?

You may wonder, ‘How is it possible to find out the truth about anything?’ After all, finding out the truth about many things seems to be getting more and more difficult. Why?

Many people do not trust governments, businesses, or the media to tell them the truth. They find it difficult to distinguish facts from opinions, half-truths, and outright lies that are presented as reliable information. In this climate of distrust and misinformation, people disagree not only on how to interpret the facts but also on what the actual facts are.

Despite such challenges, it is possible to find truthful answers to life’s most important questions. How? By applying skills you use in everyday life.

YOUR SEARCH FOR TRUTH

To some extent, you search for truth every day. Consider Jessica’s situation. “My daughter’s peanut allergy is so severe,” she says, “that even a trace amount of peanut protein can be fatal.” Jessica needs to know that the food she buys will be safe for her daughter. “My first step is to read food labels carefully to check the ingredients. Then I do further research and even contact the manufacturer to confirm that there is no risk of cross contamination. I also consider other reliable sources that can vouch for the company’s reputation for following safe food practices.”

Your daily search for truth may not be as critical as Jessica’s, but like Jessica, you may use the following approach to find answers to questions you have:

Get the facts.

Do additional research.

Make sure your sources are credible.

This same process can help you find truthful answers to life’s big questions. How?



A UNIQUE BOOK OF TRUTH

When searching for Bible truth, Jessica used a similar approach to the one she uses when researching her daughter's food allergies. She says, "Careful reading and diligent research helped me find the truth in the Bible." Like Jessica, millions of people have learned what the Bible says about these questions:

Why are we here?

What happens at death?

Why is there suffering?

What is God doing to end all suffering?

How can we have a happy family life?

You can find truthful answers to these and other questions by reading the Bible and doing additional research online at www.jw.org.

This issue of
The Watchtower
will examine the
following questions:

Who is God?

Who is Jesus Christ?

What is the
Kingdom of God?

What does the
future hold?

First, though, let us begin by considering why we can trust the Bible as a reliable source of truth.



The Bible —A Reliable Source of Truth

Throughout history, people from many backgrounds have considered the Bible to be a reliable source of truth. Today, millions follow its teachings. Yet others dismiss the Bible as being irrelevant or fictitious. What do you think? Can you find truth in the Bible?

WHY YOU CAN TRUST THE BIBLE

How can you determine if the Bible merits your trust? Consider an illustration: If a friend consistently told you the truth over many years, you would likely consider him trustworthy. Has the Bible, like a trustworthy friend, consistently told the truth? Note some examples.



Truthful Writers

Bible writers were very honest, often revealing their own mistakes and failings. For example, the prophet Jonah wrote about his own disobedience. (Jonah 1:1-3) In fact, he concluded his Bible book by revealing how God chastised him, yet he made no mention of how he corrected his own attitude. (Jonah 4:1, 4, 10, 11) The honesty of all the Bible writers indicates their sincere concern for truth.

Practical Truth

Does the Bible always give sound advice about practical matters? It certainly does. For example, note what the Bible says about maintaining healthy relationships: “All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must do to them.” (Matthew 7:12) “A mild answer turns away rage, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1) Yes, Bible truths remain as practical today as the day they were written.



Historical Truth

Many archaeological discoveries over the years verify the existence of various peoples and places and the accuracy of events mentioned in the Bible. As an example, consider the evidence for one minor detail. The Bible states that in the time of Nehemiah, Tyrians (Phoenicians from Tyre) who lived in Jerusalem “were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise.”—Nehemiah 13:16.

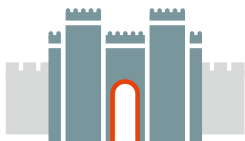
Is there any evidence to support this Bible verse? Yes, there is. Archaeologists have discovered Phoenician goods in Israel, suggesting trade between the two ancient nations. Furthermore, in Jerusalem, the remains of Mediterranean fish have been unearthed. Archaeologists believe that the fish were brought from the distant coast by merchants. After analyzing the evidence, one scholar concluded: “The statement in Neh[emiah] 13:16 that the Tyrians sold fish in Jerusalem is quite plausible.”



Scientific Truth

The Bible is primarily a religious and historical book. But when it touches on scientific matters, it harmonizes with true science. Note one example.

About 3,500 years ago, the Bible stated that the earth is suspended “upon nothing.” (Job 26:7) This differed greatly from the myths that described the earth as floating on water or being carried by a giant tortoise. Some 1,100 years after the book of Job was written, people continued to believe that the earth could not just hang in midair; it had to have something to rest upon. Only three hundred years ago, in 1687, Isaac Newton published his work on gravity and explained that the earth is held in orbit by an invisible force. This scientific milestone confirmed what the Bible had stated more than 3,000 years earlier!



Prophetic Truth

How accurate are the Bible's many prophecies? Consider one example: Isaiah's prophecy about the fall of Babylon.

The Prophecy: In the eighth century B.C.E., the Bible writer Isaiah declared that Babylon—which was only later to become the capital of a powerful empire—would be overthrown and eventually become uninhabited. (Isaiah 13:17-20) Isaiah even named the man who would carry this out—Cyrus. He also described Cyrus' strategy, stating that rivers would “dry up.” And he foretold that the city gates would be left open.—Isaiah 44:27–45:1.

The Fulfillment: Some 200 years after Isaiah's prophecy, a Persian king attacked Babylon. His name? Cyrus.

Because Babylon was heavily fortified, Cyrus turned his attention to the Euphrates River, which ran through the city. His men dug a canal upstream to divert the river into a marshland. This dropped the river level enough to make it possible for Cyrus' army to march through the thigh-deep water of the riverbed, which adjoined the city walls. Incredibly, the Babylonians had left the gates that faced the river open! Cyrus' army entered Babylon through the open gates and overthrew it.

However, one detail remained: Did Babylon become uninhabited? For some centuries, people continued living there. But today, Babylon's ruins—near Baghdad, Iraq—testify to the prophecy's complete fulfillment. Yes, the Bible is reliable even when it discusses future events.

A RELIABLE SOURCE OF TRUTH

These are only a few of numerous examples that have led many to consider the Bible to be not just trustworthy but “just as it truthfully is, as the word of God.”—1 Thessalonians 2:13.

But what truths does the Bible contain? Can these benefit you? The rest of this magazine will discuss some important Bible truths. We will begin with what the Bible reveals about its author—God.

The Truth About God and Christ

Although humans worship many gods, there is only one true God. (John 17:3) He is “the Supreme One,” the Creator of everything and the Source of all life. He alone is worthy of our worship.—Daniel 7:18; Revelation 4:11.

Who Is God?

What Is God’s Name? God himself says: “I am Jehovah. That is my name.” (Isaiah 42:8) The personal name of God appears some 7,000 times in the Bible. However, many Bible translations improperly substitute this name with a title, such as “Lord.” God wants you to be his friend, so he encourages you to “call on his name.”—Psalm 105:1.

Jehovah’s Titles. The Bible refers to Jehovah by such titles as “God,” “Almighty,” “Creator,” “Father,” “Lord,” and “Sovereign.” Many prayers are recorded in the Bible in which Jehovah is addressed by both a respectful title and his personal name, Jehovah.—Daniel 9:4.



God's Form. God is an invisible spirit. (John 4:24) The Bible confirms that “no man has seen God.” (John 1:18) The Bible reveals his feelings. People can cause him grief, or they can “bring pleasure to him.”—Proverbs 11:20; Psalm 78:40, 41.

God's Wonderful Attributes. God is impartial toward people of all nations and backgrounds. (Acts 10:34, 35) He is also “merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in loyal love and truth.” (Exodus 34:6, 7) However, four attributes of God are especially appealing.

Power. Since he is “God Almighty,” he has unlimited power to accomplish whatever he promises.—Genesis 17:1.

Wisdom. God's wisdom surpasses that of anyone else. In that sense the Bible says that he “alone is wise.”—Romans 16:27.

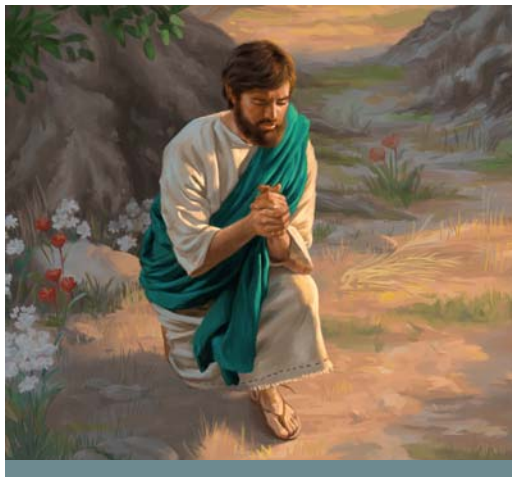
Justice. God always does what is right. His actions are “perfect,” and he “is never unjust.”—Deuteronomy 32:4.

Love. The Bible says that “God is love.” (1 John 4:8) Not only does God show love—he is the very personification of love. His superlative love influences everything he does, and it benefits us in many ways.

God's Friendship With Humans. God is our loving heavenly Father. (Matthew 6:9) If we put faith in him, we can be his friends. (Psalm 25:14) In fact, God invites you to draw close to him in prayer and to “throw all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.”—1 Peter 5:7; James 4:8.

What Is the Difference Between God and Christ?

Jesus Is Not God. Jesus is unique—he is the only person created directly by God. That is why the Bible calls him God's Son. (John 1:14) After creating Jesus, Jehovah used his firstborn as “a master worker” to create everything and everyone else.—Proverbs 8:30, 31; Colossians 1:15, 16.



Jesus Christ never claimed to be God. Instead, he explained: “I am a representative from [God], and that One sent me.” (John 7:29) When speaking to one of his disciples, Jesus called Jehovah “my Father and your Father” and “my God and your God.” (John 20:17) After Jesus died, Jehovah resurrected him to life in heaven and gave him great authority at His right hand.—Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:32, 33.

Jesus Christ Can Help You Draw Close to God

Jesus came to the earth to teach us about his Father. Jehovah himself said about Jesus: “This is my Son, the beloved. Listen to him.” (Mark 9:7) Jesus knows God better than anyone else. He said: “No one knows who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.” —Luke 10:22.

Jesus reflects God’s qualities perfectly. Jesus imitated his Father’s qualities so closely that he could say: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father also.” (John 14:9) Jesus drew people to God by reflecting his Father’s love in his own words and deeds. He said: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) He also said: “True worshippers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for indeed, the Father is looking for ones like these to worship him.” (John 4:23) Imagine that! Jehovah is looking for people like you who want to know the truth about him.



The Truth About the Kingdom of God

Jesus taught his followers to pray: “Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also on earth.” (Matthew 6:9, 10) What is God’s Kingdom? What does it do? And why should we pray for it?

Jesus is the King of God’s Kingdom.

Luke 1:31-33: “You are to name him Jesus. This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule as King over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end to his Kingdom.”

The Kingdom was the central theme of Jesus’ preaching.

Matthew 9:35: “Jesus set out on a tour of all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the Kingdom and curing every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity.”

Jesus gave his disciples a sign to help them know when the Kingdom was about to come.

Matthew 24:7: “For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another.”

Jesus’ disciples now preach about the Kingdom earth wide.

Matthew 24:14: “And this good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”



God's Kingdom—The Facts

Location. God's Kingdom is a real government set up by God in heaven.
—DANIEL 2:44; MATTHEW 4:17.

Purpose. God's Kingdom will transform the earth into a paradise home where all humans will live in peace and harmony and never get sick or die.—PSALM 37:11, 29.

Rulers. God appointed Jesus as the King to rule in heaven along with 144,000 corulers, who are bought from the earth.—LUKE 1:30-33; 12:32; REVELATION 14:1, 3.

Subjects. The subjects of the Kingdom will live on earth and willingly submit to Jesus' rulership and obey the Kingdom's laws.
—MATTHEW 7:21.

Why Jesus Is Best Qualified to Rule Mankind

While on earth, Jesus proved that he would be a capable and loving ruler because he

Showed concern for the poor.—LUKE 14:13, 14.

Hated corruption and injustice.—MATTHEW 21:12, 13.

Controlled the forces of nature.—MARK 4:39.

Fed thousands of people.
—MATTHEW 14:19-21.

Felt pity for the sick and cured all who were suffering.
—MATTHEW 8:16.

Raised the dead back to life.
—JOHN 11:43, 44.

How God's Kingdom Can Benefit You Now

You can live a happier life now if you become a subject of God's Kingdom. For example, subjects of the Kingdom

"Pursue peace with all people."
—HEBREWS 12:14.

Enjoy peace and unity in the family because marriage mates love and respect each other.
—EPHESIANS 5:22, 23, 33.

Have a happy and fulfilling life because of being "conscious of their spiritual need."—MATTHEW 5:3.

The Truth About the Future

Have you ever wondered what the future holds? The Bible shows that significant events just ahead of us will affect all people on earth.

Jesus explained how we would “know that the Kingdom of God is near.” (Luke 21: 31) He prophesied that, among other things, there would be great wars, major earthquakes, food shortages, and pestilences—the very things we are witnessing today.—Luke 21:10-17.

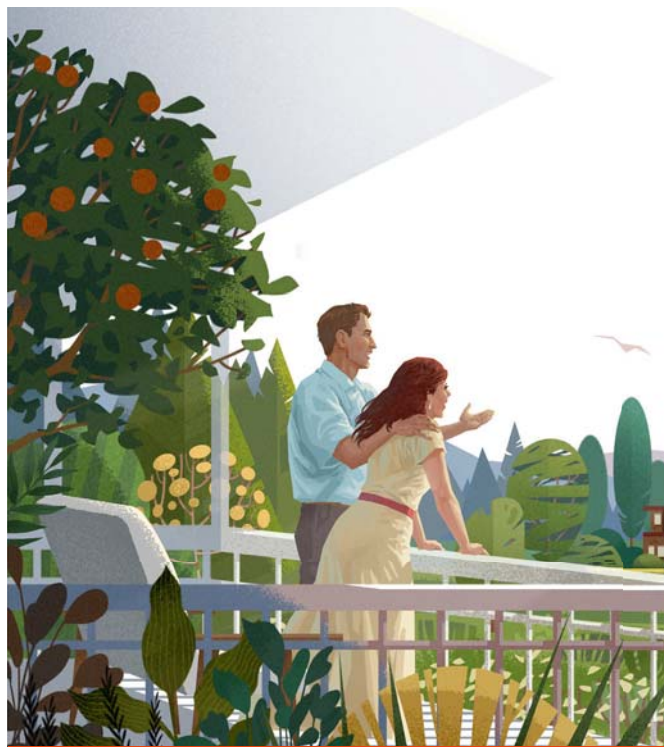
The Bible further shows that the “last days” of human rulership would be identified by the way people behave or, more precisely, misbehave. You can read the description at 2 Timothy 3:1-5. When you see these attitudes and actions today, no doubt you agree that this Bible prophecy closely matches what is happening now.

What does this mean? The time is near for God’s Kingdom to make big changes that will significantly affect life on earth for the better. (Luke 21:36) In the Bible, God promises good things for the earth and for the people who will live on it. Here are a few examples.

GOOD RULERSHIP

“And to him [Jesus] there were given rulership, honor, and a kingdom, that the peoples, nations, and language groups should all serve him. His rulership is an everlasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom will not be destroyed.”—DANIEL 7:14.

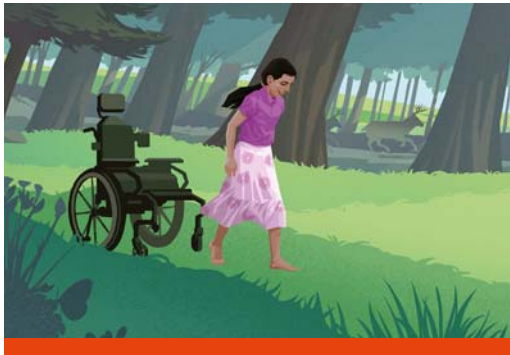
What this means: You can enjoy life under a superior global government that God sets up with his Son as King.



GOOD HEALTH

“No resident will say: ‘I am sick.’”—ISAIAH 33:24.

What this means: You will never get sick or be disabled; you will be able to live without ever dying.



TOTAL PEACE

“He is bringing an end to wars throughout the earth.”—PSALM 46:9.

What this means: There will be no more threat of war and all the suffering it causes.



THE EARTH WILL BE FILLED WITH GOOD PEOPLE

“The wicked will be no more . . . The meek will possess the earth.”—PSALM 37:10, 11.

What this means: There will be no more evil people, only people eager to obey God.

THE EARTH WILL BE A GLOBAL PARADISE

“They will build houses and live in them, and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit-age.”—ISAIAH 65:21, 22.

What this means: The whole earth will be made beautiful. God will fulfill our prayer that his will be done “on earth.”—Matthew 6:10.



WHAT THE TRUTH CAN DO FOR YOU

God, who can only ever speak truth, offers you the hope of “everlasting life.”—John 3:16.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

- Learn what God’s Word of truth says.—John 17:3, 17.
- Choose to obey God.—Deuteronomy 30:19, 20.
- Apply God’s practical guidance in your life.—James 1:25.

Jehovah’s Witnesses all over the world are experiencing the benefits of learning the truth from the Bible. They will be happy to share what they are learning with you.

To learn more about God’s purpose for humans, see chapter 3 of the book *What Can the Bible Teach Us?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses and available online at www.jw.org.



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