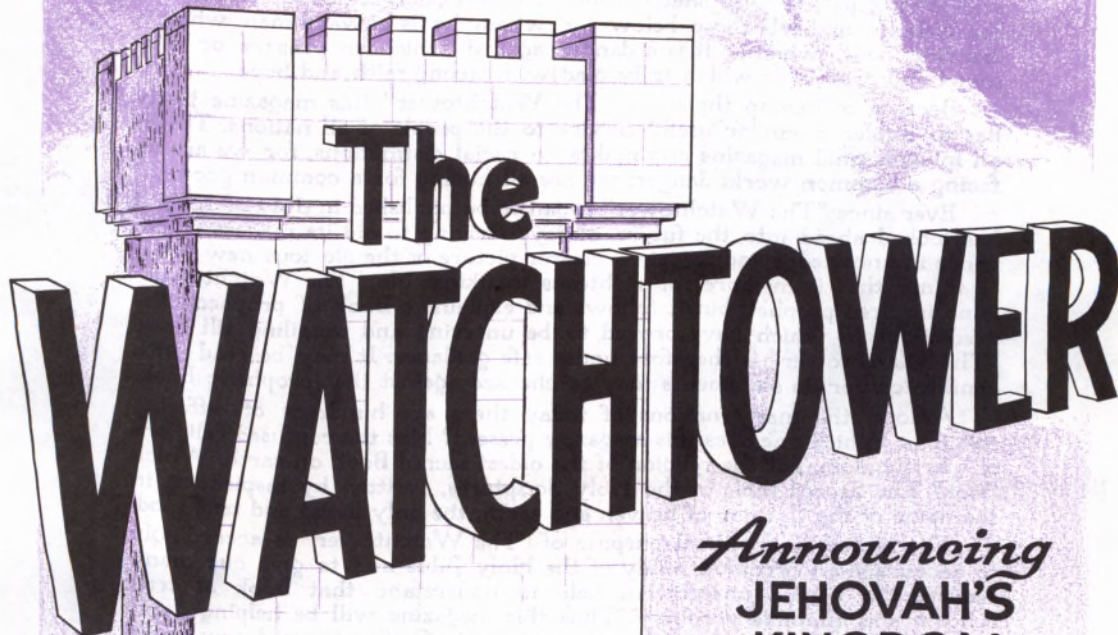




The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

APRIL 1, 1972

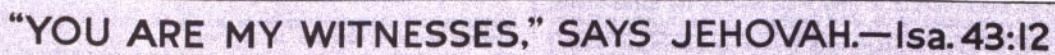
Semimonthly

**"EXERT YOURSELVES
VIGOROUSLY!"**

—
A TEST OF HUMILITY

—
DOES SEXUAL MORALITY MAKE SENSE?

© WTB&TS



"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

PUBLISHED BY THE
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street
N. H. KNORR, President
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
GRANT SUITER, Secretary
"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address in-
bel). Write Watchtower, 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, New York 11201, U.S.A.

Average Printing Each Issue: 7,800,000

Five cents a copy

Now Published in 74 Languages

Semi-monthly: Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chishona, Cibemba, Cinyanja, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malagasy, Norwegian, Portuguese, Sesotho, Siamese, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu.

Monthly: Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Croatian, Efik, Ewe, Fijian, Ga, Gun, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Ibo, Icelandic, Indonesian, Kanarese, Kikongo, Lingala, Malayalam, Marathi, Melanesian-Pidgin, Motu, Pampango, Pangasinan, Papament, Polish, Russian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Silori, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Tamil, Tswana, Tumbuka, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese.

Watch Tower Society offices		Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201		\$1.50
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135		\$1.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto 390, Ontario		\$1.50
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London N.W. 7		65p
Ghana, West Africa, Box 760, Accra		£1.50
New Zealand, 621 New North Rd., Auckland 3		\$1.50
Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Colony		10/9
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, Transvaal		R1.10

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn.

Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires.

Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y.

Printed in U.S.A.



Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

Vol. XCIII

April 1, 1972

Number 7

HOW is your health? Is it all that you would like it to be? There is something that can improve it, no matter what your present condition may be. Is it diet? No. Is it medicine? No. What will it cost? It costs nothing and has no detrimental side effects. All you need to do is read the Bible and apply its sound, basic principles of living.—Prov. 4:20-22.

The Bible's simple, clean principles truly can mean 'health to all your flesh.' How is this true? Well, think for a moment about the human body. It is the most complex "machine" that exists on earth. No man really understands what is involved in the intricate workings of the body. As a result, in hardly any other field of knowledge do we find more contradictions than in the field of health care. Only the body's Creator completely understands the human body.

To face life successfully, everyone, healthy or ill, needs a valid, well-founded hope. The proper mental and spiritual outlook is essential in order to face sicknesses that come and to endure ailments one may have. Doctors know that the *total* welfare of patients, mentally and physically, must be considered to improve health. God the Creator not only knows the body's every function; he is also more interested in us than anyone else. Consequently, what he tells us will give us sure, reliable hope—not a passing thing, but a hope that can fill our lives.

"Good Health TO YOU!"

The hope the Creator holds forth is everlasting life on a beautified earth under His administration. Whether our health holds out until then need not be our chief concern, for he has provided a resurrection. (Acts 24:15) Since the Bible shows the dead are unconscious (Eccl. 9:5, 10), if you should die before this righteous condition is brought to the earth, to you the time in the death state would seem only a split second, even if it amounted to years. You would awaken, however, in God's new arrangement of things here on earth, under his Kingdom rule. (Rev. 21:1-4) Knowing this is a great step toward health of mind and body now, for it greatly lessens the fear of death.—Hos. 13:14.

There is another most important factor. That is the help that the Bible gives in controlling our emotions. Here is where the Bible can give us help that no doctor or psychiatrist can provide. What is its counsel on this vital problem?

Well, it tells us: "Never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?'"

... For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you. So, never be anxious about the next day."—Matt. 6:31-34.

The Bible also kindly counsels against the more violent and destructive emotions. Venting our anger, vindictiveness and desire for revenge will not bring about the results we would really like. (Rom. 12:19) Rather, such emotions and desires will prove to be calamitous.

The Bible says: "Man's wrath does not work out God's righteousness." (Jas. 1:20) It wisely advises: "Let the sun not set with you in a provoked state." (Eph. 4:26) Straighten out the trouble immediately in a peaceful way. Then your sleep will be pleasant, with benefit to your health.—Matt. 5:23, 24; 18:15.

Is it a proved fact that such emotions actually affect one's physical health? The Bible definitely shows that this is the case. (Prov. 14:30) And in harmony with that, a study of emotions by medical doctors and psychiatrists reveals that jealousy, anxiety and anger or rage contribute to, aggravate, or even cause, such ailments as asthma, skin diseases, hives, ulcers and dental and digestive troubles, and can trigger heart failure.

Following Bible principles gives a person balance in life and helps him to avoid the things that destroy health. A few more examples may be mentioned in proof:

Bible Principle

"Flee from fornication."—1 Cor. 6:18.

Avoid greed, gluttony, heavy drinking.—Prov. 23:20, 21; 1 Cor. 5:11.

"Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit." (Includes habits such as tobacco use, perversions; also mental defilement, such as drug abuse.)—2 Cor. 7:1.

Avoid spiritism. (Includes astrology.)—Gal. 5:19, 20.

Forsake bad associations.—1 Cor. 15:33; Prov. 13:20; 28:7; Ex. 23:1, 2.

Result of Following Bible Principle

Freedom from venereal disease

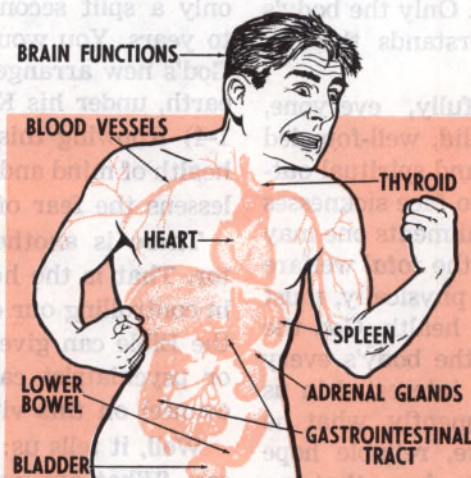
Avoidance of or relief from stomach, liver and heart ailments, other dangers

Great degree of protection from many infectious diseases as well as heart disease, cancer, mental unbalance, untimely death

Freedom from being led into demon possession, insanity, death as a suicide

Protection from bodily injury due to being drawn into unwise actions, revelries, crime, uprisings

What more could you rightly want now than better health, a better mental and spiritual condition, better relations with your fellowmen and, most importantly, with God? "Good health to you" is a Bible expression. A man with an experience of some thirty years in practicing godly devotion as recommended in the Bible said: "It holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." Why not prove this for yourself by reading the Bible and applying its fine principles.—Acts 15:29; 1 Tim. 4:8.



Giving in to rage radically affects the major body systems labeled above, with potentially damaging results

They shall know that **A PROPHET WAS AMONG THEM'**

JEHOVAH GOD is interested in having people know him. Though he is invisible to human eyes, he provides various ways by which they can know his personality. They can know what to expect from him and what he expects of them.

One can come to understand that Jehovah is a God of surpassing wisdom by observing creation. This also reveals the loving care with which he designed things for man's welfare and enjoyment. A second way to know God is through his Word of truth, the Bible. Herein one finds the full expression of Jehovah's purpose toward mankind—why man is on the earth and the blessings that God has in store.

A third way of coming to know Jehovah God is through his representatives. In ancient times he sent prophets as his special messengers. While these men foretold things to come, they also served the people by telling them of God's will for them at that time, often also warning them of dangers and calamities. People today can view the creative works. They have at hand the Bible, but it is little read or understood. So, does Jehovah have a prophet to help them, to warn them of dangers and to declare things to come?

IDENTIFYING THE "PROPHET"

These questions can be answered in the affirmative. Who is this prophet? The cler-

gy of the so-called "Christian" nations hold themselves before the people as being the ones commissioned to speak for God. But, as pointed out in the previous issue of this magazine, they have failed God and failed as proclaimers of his kingdom by approving a man-made political organization, the League of Nations (now the

United Nations), as "the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth."

However, Jehovah did not let the people of Christendom, as led by the clergy, go without being warned that the League was a counterfeit substitute for the real kingdom of God. He had a "prophet" to warn them. This "prophet" was not one man, but was a body of men and women. It was the small group of footstep followers of Jesus Christ, known at that time as International Bible Students. Today they are known as Jehovah's Christian witnesses. They are still proclaiming a warning, and have been joined and assisted in their commissioned work by hundreds of thousands of persons who have listened to their message with belief.

Of course, it is easy to say that this group acts as a "prophet" of God. It is another thing to prove it. The only way that this can be done is to review the record. What does it show?

During the World War I period this group, the International Bible Students, was very active in preaching the good news of God's kingdom, as their Leader Jesus Christ had set this work before them in his prophecy at Matthew 24:14. They took literally Jesus' words to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world." (John 18:36) They also took to heart Jesus' words to his fol-

lowers: "You are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world." They expected to suffer for living according to that rule, just as Jesus went on to say, "on this account the world hates you." (John 15:19) Hatred toward them grew into violence during World War I.

These Bible Students had long been concerned with Ezekiel and his prophecy. In 1917 they published a book entitled "The Finished Mystery," explaining the book of Ezekiel as well as that of Revelation. This book criticized the clergy as false to the Word of Jehovah. Within nine months a ban was put on its circulation in the United States and Canada. Then eight members of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, including its president and secretary-treasurer, were sentenced to prison in the Federal penitentiary, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

Though the work of these Christians was crippled for a while, after only nine months the eight men were freed from prison, in March 1919. They accepted this as an answer from God to their prayers. Their work was revived, much to the consternation of the clergy, who had been behind the banning.

Accordingly, their magazine *The Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, in its issues of August 1 and 15, 1919, encouraged vigorous resumption of the work of preaching the good news free from the fear of men. Under the subject "Blessed Are the Fearless," the following statements were made:

"There is a fear which is very proper, and which everyone must have who is pleasing to God, and this is known as 'Godly fear'. It means a holy reverence for Jehovah and a fear lest we should displease him and come short of the blessings he has promised us. . . . The Scriptures abound with testimony that those whom God approves do not fear man nor any other creature, but have a holy, reverential fear of Jehovah. In times of old Jehovah justified some men to friendship

with him, and the record of his dealing with them was written for the benefit of the church."

Ezekiel was one of these men so used by God, and not only his prophecies, but also Ezekiel himself and his acts were pictorial of things to come.

THE "PROPHET" SPEAKS TO CHRISTENDOM

A General Convention was held by the International Bible Students at Cedar Point, Ohio, September 1-8, 1919. Thousands of Jehovah's servants were present from the United States and Canada. There the Watch Tower Society's president urged the fearless resumption of the work, and this with the use of the outspoken magazine entitled "The Golden Age." In the public talk delivered on the subject "The Hope for Distressed Humanity," the speaker declared that the Lord's displeasure was certain to be visited upon the League of Nations,

"because the clergy—Catholic and Protestant—claiming to be God's representatives, have abandoned his plan and endorsed the League of Nations, hailing it as a political expression of Christ's kingdom on earth."*

The League of Nations came into being in 1919 and began really to function when it was ratified by the signatory powers at Paris on January 10, 1920. But Jehovah's servants continued to proclaim the Messianic kingdom of God. When the ban on *The Finished Mystery* was lifted, they resumed its circulation and, with it as a textbook, they continued to study the book of Ezekiel. As time went on and further developments fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel, a three-volume set of books titled "Vindication" provided an up-to-date understanding, showing more fully the application of the prophecy.

Thus this group of anointed followers of Jesus Christ, doing a work in Christendom paralleling Ezekiel's work among the

* See the *Federal Council Bulletin*, Volume II, No. 1, of the year 1919, pages 12-14.

Jews, were manifestly the modern-day Ezekiel, the "prophet" commissioned by Jehovah to declare the good news of God's Messianic kingdom and to give warning to Christendom. It is significant that, in 1931, after twelve years of faithful service despite the opposition of Christendom's clergy, these followers of Christ embraced the name "Jehovah's witnesses" at the same convention at which the book *Vindication* was released.—Isa. 43:10-12, *American Standard Version*.

PROPHET SENT TO "REBELLIOUS NATIONS"

When Jehovah spoke to the Jewish priest Ezekiel, commissioning him as his prophet, he said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to rebellious nations that have rebelled against me." (Ezek. 2:3) Who are those who constitute the "sons of Israel" and the "rebellious nations" against Jehovah, in this "time of the end"?

Back there in Ezekiel's day the Israelite people to whom Ezekiel was sent could be called "rebellious nations" because in 997 B.C.E. ten of the tribes of Israel had revolted against rule by the royal line of David, who sat on "Jehovah's throne." (1 Chron. 29:23) Thus there came to be two kingdoms or "nations." The Kingdom of Israel set up golden calves for worship and the Kingdom of Judah later also rebelled against Jehovah by breaking his laws and engaging in idolatry.

In the modern fulfillment, who are the "rebellious nations" that have rebelled against Jehovah? Their counterpart is Christendom. The Bible gives the proof. For Christendom has applied to herself the apostle Paul's words at Galatians 6:15, 16 (*Authorized Version*): "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy,

and upon the Israel of God." For instance, in his "A Commentary and Critical Notes" (1836 edition), the Wesleyan Methodist minister Dr. Adam Clarke makes this comment on the expression "The Israel of God": "The *true Christians*, called here the *Israel of God*, to distinguish them from *Israel according to the flesh*."

Romans 2:29 (AV) corroborates the above understanding. The apostle says: "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

The history of Christendom shows that she has not been true to her claim of being "the Israel of God." From the fourth century on she has shown herself to be apostate, rebellious against Jehovah and his Word of truth. Corresponding to Israel's history, there was a break between the Greek churches and the Latin churches in 1054 C.E., when the Roman pope's legates excommunicated Patriarch Michael Cerularius of Constantinople.

Later, in 1529 C.E., the Protestant movement was established by the followers of ex-priest Martin Luther, and in 1534 the king of England, Henry VIII, was declared to be the Supreme Head of the Church of England. After this, numerous non-Roman Catholic sects sprang up, so that a number of so-called "Christian" lands have their own national State churches. Therefore Christendom can be called "nations," and their attitude toward God's Word the Bible and toward his Messianic kingdom is one of rebellion toward Jehovah. They continue to prefer political man-rule.

JEHOVAH'S "PROPHET" VINDICATED

Ezekiel's name meant "God Strengthened," and in order to carry out his mission to the end he needed God's help, for the professed people of God to whom he

was sent were "insolent of face and hard of heart." At the time, they might not view or appreciate him as a prophet of Jehovah. Nevertheless, whether they paid attention to him or refrained, the occasion was to come when these rebellious people would "know also that a prophet himself happened to be in the midst of them." Jehovah would confirm him as a prophet then by causing what Ezekiel prophesied to come true. (Ezek. 2:3-5) Ezekiel was further told:

"And you, O son of man, do not be afraid of them; and of their words do not be afraid, because there are obstinate ones and things pricking you and it is among scorpions that you are dwelling. Of their words do not you be afraid, and at their faces do not you be struck with terror, for they are a rebellious house. And you must speak my words to them, regardless of whether they hear or they refrain, for they are a case of rebellion."
—Ezek. 2:6, 7.

Since the year 1919 C.E. Jehovah's witnesses have found circumstances to be just like that as they have made the widest possible declaration of the good news of the Kingdom in 207 lands of the earth.

To Ezekiel, in his vision, and, symbolically to the modern-day "prophet," the spirit-begotten, anointed ones who are the nucleus of Jehovah's witnesses today, God gave something to eat. Ezekiel says:

"And I began to see, and, look! there was a hand thrust out to me, and, look! in it there was the roll of a book. And he gradually spread it out before me, and it was written upon in front and on the back; and there were written in it dirges and moaning and wailing."—Ezek. 2:8-10.

No space on the scroll being wasted, it being written upon on both sides, it was a full message, containing a great deal of gloomy messages of calamity, back there to Jewry, and today to Christendom. Why so? Because in both instances Jehovah's professed people were so rebellious and set in their ungodly way that Jehovah had to pronounce judgment upon them.

The scroll was doubtless delivered to Ezekiel by the hand of one of the cherubs in the vision. This would indicate that Jehovah's witnesses today make their declaration of the good news of the Kingdom under angelic direction and support. (Rev. 14:6, 7; Matt. 25:31, 32) And since no word or work of Jehovah can fail, for he is God Almighty, the nations will see the fulfillment of what these witnesses say as directed from heaven.

Yes, the time must come shortly that the nations will have to know that really a "prophet" of Jehovah was among them. Actually now more than a million and a half persons are helping that collective or composite "prophet" in his preaching work and well over that number of others are studying the Bible with the "prophet" group and its companions.

So Jehovah has made every provision for individuals to know him and to receive his loving-kindness and life. Thus there is no excuse for Christendom's people not to know Jehovah. More than that, Jehovah is interested not only in the vindication of his own name but also in vindicating his "prophet." Through another of his ancient prophets, Isaiah, he said to Jewry just as he says to Christendom today: "Look! My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart, but you yourselves will make outcries because of the pain of heart and you will howl because of sheer breakdown of spirit."—Isa. 65:14.

Even today we hear complaints from Christendom's churches about dwindling church attendance and see many young men abandoning the priesthood and the ministerial profession. Yet at the same time we see spiritual prosperity and contentment among those proclaiming Jehovah's Messianic kingdom. We may look for an even more marked fulfillment of Isaiah's words in the near future.

A TEST

of Humility

HUMILITY is a quality that the Sovereign of the universe, Jehovah God, looks for in those whom he honors by use in his service. The Bible tells us: "God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones."—Jas. 4:6.

Though supreme, Jehovah God is humble. How can this be? God's being humble, of course, does not mean that he submits himself to others. Rather it means he is ever ready and willing to exercise mercy toward lowly sinners who sincerely desire his approval. One who appreciated this was King David. After Jehovah rescued him from his enemies, David sang: "You will give me your shield of salvation, and it is your humility that makes me great." (2 Sam. 22:36) Yes, humbly Jehovah condescended to come to the aid of an imperfect (though right-hearted) man, David, and thereby made him great.

God's firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, also reflected humility. (Phil. 2:5-8) As a perfect man, he was never overcritical or arrogant toward the sinful persons among whom he lived and worked. Pity and compassion moved him to help others spiritually and physically.—Matt. 9:36.

Like Jesus Christ, millions of faithful angels have shown humility in both attitude and action. The angel used in conveying a prophetic revelation to the apostle John humbly acknowledged: "All I am is a fellow slave of you and of your

brothers." (Rev. 22:9) And of angels as a whole, Jesus said: "Joy arises among the angels of God over one sinner that repents." (Luke 15:10) This joy is indeed an evidence of great humility. How so?

Well, back there in the first century C.E. repentant sinners came in line for membership in the heavenly kingdom. All who thereafter proved themselves faithful to the very death were to be associate king-priests with the Lord Jesus Christ, attaining a position higher than that of the angels. (1 Cor. 6:2, 3; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Rev. 20:6) Yet the angels did not feel slighted because of not having been chosen by Jehovah God despite their record of loyal service dating from long before man was even created. No, they rejoiced, appreciating that what these humans had faced and overcome equipped them to serve as sympathetic and merciful kings and priests.—Compare Hebrews 4:14-16.

So appreciative are the angels of the rightness and righteousness of Jehovah's arrangement that they humbly minister to the prospective Kingdom heirs on earth. Says Hebrews 1:14: "Are they not all spirits for public service, sent forth to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation?" They set a fine example.

A TEST FOR THOSE NOT APPOINTED AS ELDERS

As imperfect humans, we are prone to think more of ourselves than we really

should. So we must put forth effort to imitate the humility of Jehovah God and of his angelic sons, including Jesus Christ. At times developments within the congregations of God's people put the humility of many to the test. Especially is this the case when men are appointed to serve in special capacities. For example, some, though not appointed as elders, may feel that they should be looked to as teachers in the congregation.

Even in the first century C.E. certain Christians reasoned that way. Evidently addressing himself to such men, the disciple James stated: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers; you should realize that those of us who do so will be called to the stricter account." —Jas. 3:1, *New American Bible*.

It is sobering indeed to consider that, in the accomplishment of their work, elders have greater accountability than Christians generally. (Luke 12:48) This matter of being "called to the stricter account" is not an easy thing for elders. They, like their Christian brothers, are imperfect men. The disciple James acknowledged: "We all stumble many times." —Jas. 3:2.

The imperfections of elders are often revealed to a greater degree than those of other members of the congregation. Why is this? It is because elders are constantly before the congregation, teaching, exhorting and reproving. Their actions come under close scrutiny by members of the congregation, for the elders are looked to as examples in proper Christian conduct.

A man who is not an appointed elder but believes that he should be one does well to reflect seriously on what James wrote. He could ask himself: *Why* do I want to be an elder? Is it because I want to expend myself in behalf of my brothers? Is my motive wholly an unselfish one or do I desire the prominence that is as-

sociated with one who is a teacher of fellow believers? Am I really in position to render a more serious account than other members of the congregation? Do I have the wisdom and insight to judge matters affecting people's lives? Can I give sound Scriptural counsel that would truly aid others in solving personal and family problems?

Aware of their limitations in at least some of these respects, many Christian men recognize that they do not qualify as elders. They rejoice that responsible brothers having the needed spiritual qualifications put loyalty to Jehovah above personal friendship and therefore did not recommend them for the position of elder. Such appreciative men realize that they have not been hurt by this. There is nothing to prevent them from sharing fully in the work of preaching and teaching Bible truth to outsiders, loyally supporting those who are elders in the congregation in the accomplishment of their work, cultivating the fruitage of God's spirit in fuller measure, and doing good toward their Christian brothers. And are these not the things that make a Christian's life rich and meaningful? Surely they are.

These humble brothers know that they can continue to work toward being elders, not for self-glorification, but to the blessing of fellow believers. They may even approach elders in the congregation, asking what they might do to improve in areas where they do not quite measure up to the Scriptural requirements for elders.

If a brother tends to be "pushy" and competitive, trying to impress others with his abilities, he should first strive to cultivate greater humility. As the disciple James counseled: "Let his right conduct give practical proof of it, with the modesty that comes of wisdom. But if you are harbouring bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, consider whether

your claims are not false, and a defiance of the truth." (Jas. 3:13, 14, *New English Bible*) Not showy display, but humility and modesty are characteristic of the possessor of true wisdom. Men who have bitter jealousies and are contentious have no basis for boasting about their being qualified to teach their brothers. Their claims would defy the truth about the matter.

A TEST AFFECTING APPOINTED ELDERS

The test of humility also includes those who are appointed as elders. Many of these men have served as presiding ministers for a number of years. They were looked to as the "number one" man in the congregation. Often theirs was the deciding voice in accepting or rejecting suggestions. How do they feel about relinquishing the chairmanship of the body of elders to someone else? Are they fearful that things will not go as well? Are they willing to give due consideration to the suggestions of others? Or do they, because of their past experience, tend to override the suggestions of others?

Former presiding ministers with the right attitude appreciate that Jehovah's arrangement is always best. They earnestly desire to handle matters in harmony with the apostle Paul's counsel to 'consider that others of God's servants are superior to themselves.' (Phil. 2:3) With due modesty, they acknowledge that others are superior to themselves in certain qualities. Some brothers are outstanding in their display of empathy, kindness, friendliness and generosity. Others have an excellent grasp of the Scriptures and are able to apply them effectively when problems arise. Still others possess remarkable zeal, enthusiasm and drive. Truly, no one man

has *all* the desirable qualities in complete balance. So these humble former presiding ministers rejoice at the enriching effect the rotation of the chairmanship accomplishes on behalf of all in the congregation.—Compare 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

The brothers appointed to serve as new chairmen or presiding ministers in rota-

tion also have their humility put to the test. Will they now try to impress or superimpose their image on the congregation, changing matters to suit their personal

tastes? Not if they are truly humble and modest. They recognize that their appointment does not make them the most prominent man in the congregation. They do not have all the answers. They are simply one member of the "body of elders." They need the balancing effect of the other brothers. It is just as Proverbs 15:22 says: "In the multitude of counselors there is accomplishment." Yes, a body of elders, functioning as a united whole, can reflect the beauty of godly qualities in a way that no one man ever could. That means that every elder must feel free to express himself and initiate suggestions or recommendations for the other elders to consider.

A TEST OF HUMILITY FOR CHRISTIAN YOUTHS

The young men in their late teens or early twenties likewise face a test of humility. Some of them have fine abilities and are able to express themselves well. But they lack the wisdom and experience needed by those who teach, exhort, reprove and judge matters of a very serious nature within the congregation of God's people. Not even being used as ministerial servants, some brothers in their late teens

NEXT ISSUE SPECIAL!

***Mankind's Deliverance
into God's New Order***

may feel that there is nothing for them to do. How can such young men preserve the right view of Jehovah's arrangement?

They would do well to consider the many things they can do in serving Jehovah and their brothers. Usually being free from family responsibilities, they can devote more time to studying and meditating on God's Word. Thus they can build up an excellent fund of knowledge, and that will be most helpful to them whenever they do qualify to serve as elders. There is no limit placed on what young men can do in proclaiming the good news to others. They can also offer their talents and abilities in helping elders and ministerial servants to accomplish their work. By proving themselves to be cooperative, dependable, considerate, fully devoted to Jehovah's service, they gain the respect and confidence of the entire congregation. (Acts 16:1, 2) Also it becomes clear to the entire body of elders that such young men are manifesting the qualities looked for in men who might in time be used as ministerial servants.

It is good for young men to remember that, under the Scriptural arrangement, not just some, but all of the brothers in a congregation who measure up to the needed qualifications, can be appointed as ministerial servants or as elders. Obviously, however, unless teen-agers put forth real effort to develop fine Christian qualities they will not have them when they are older. Youth provides a fine opportunity to work toward acquiring the qualities that will prove to be a blessing and source of encouragement to fellow believers.

Young men can greatly profit from associating with those who are elders and other older persons who manifest fine Christian qualities. Says Proverbs 13:20: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise." While a young man may have to wait a while before he is

appointed as a ministerial servant and eventually as an elder, this should be no cause for disturbance. It is much better to serve after one has a good background in the Scriptures and experience in life. Do not our brothers deserve the best in the way of Scriptural counsel and teaching? Certainly we would not want them to receive inferior shepherding simply in order that we might gain personally.

A TEST OF HUMILITY FOR EVERYONE

When we think about it, really the God-ordained arrangement in the congregations of Jehovah's Christian witnesses tests the humility of all associated. The elders must be humble to heed the inspired command: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; *neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock.*" (1 Pet. 5:2, 3) It also requires humility for all the other members of the congregation to cooperate with the elders, supporting their decisions and assisting them in the accomplishment of their vital work. This is in harmony with the Bible's admonition: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you."—Heb. 13:17.

True, the elders are imperfect men. They make mistakes. But if perfect, angelic sons of God are willing to minister to their needs and ours, surely all of us should humbly want to submit to Jehovah's arrangement. Our cooperating with these men can contribute much to our happiness and welfare. So may all of us bend every effort to pass the test of humility with success, to the glory of our humble heavenly Father, Jehovah God.

"EXERT YOURSELVES

Vigorously!"

THE keynote speaker at the graduation exercises of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead not many years ago advised the soon-to-be missionaries: "Every day in our life, we should be able to retire at night being glad, happy, for that day of life, because we should be able to see the good that we did because of our hard work . . . Work hard, and then you will rejoice because of the things you are doing." The advice of the Watchtower Society's president was both practical and well-founded in the Scriptures. Hard work is essential for happiness, especially if one is engaged in proclaiming Jehovah's incoming new system of things.

² If you are so engaged, how do you view your work in the Christian ministry? Are you willing to apply yourself to it with diligence? Is it the main source of your happiness in living? Are you finding genuine enjoyment in the preaching and teaching work you do, striving to become skillful in it and freely sharing the benefits of it with others? That is very good, for who wants to relapse into the attitude about work so prevalent in the world today? On every hand people seem reluctant really to apply themselves to work, and many who hire them complain that they are becoming more and more dilatory, lax and indifferent. "Slow down; the job you save may be your own," is said to be the slogan of many shop stewards. Strikes are said to be the bane of society in many countries, with labor unrest becom-

"Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able."—Luke 13:24.

ing increasingly troublesome to employers. Changing attitudes toward work were emphasized by one youngster: "Don't tell me how to work. I am from a different generation and we just do not work that hard."

³ Not only is working hard becoming more and more unpopular but apparently many connive at means to avoid all work. That facet of the failure-to-work problem is presented by the February 8, 1971, issue of *U.S. News & World Report* under the subject "Welfare Out of Control," deploring the widespread situation typified by that in New York city, where one of every six persons was said to be on relief, mainly because of "fiscal abandonment" by fathers who refuse to work, and evade responsibility of supporting their children and the mothers of those children. In his State of the Union message on January 22, 1971, the United States president, in advocating solutions to the serious problem, declared: "Let us also establish an effective work incentive and an effective work requirement."

⁴ True Christians need not be compelled to work. Such laziness is condemned by the Bible, which gives this instruction:

1. What practical advice did a graduating class of Gilead receive?

2. Describe the attitude about work prevalent in the world today.

3. What is another aspect of the failure-to-work problem?

4. (a) Must Christians be compelled to work? (b) Why should man find enjoyment in the work he does?

"Make it your aim to live quietly and to mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we ordered you." (1 Thess. 4:11) God made man so that he might find enjoyment in the work he does, deriving deep satisfaction and contentment thereby. Such provision truly is a grand gift and blessing from Jehovah. "Every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God. And I have seen that there is nothing better than that the man should rejoice in his works, for that is his portion." —Eccl. 3:13, 22; 2:10, 24; 5:18.



True Christians are not lazy; they do honest work to support their families

⁵ Accordingly, God's people need to shun worldly attitudes toward work. It is essential that they work to support themselves and for their loved ones "make honest provision, not only in the sight of Jehovah, but also in the sight of men." (2 Cor. 8:21; 2 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:8) They are well aware that laziness will lead to poverty and ruin, not only concerning material support but especially concerning spiritual things. (Prov. 10:4; 24:33, 34; 21:25) To view such matters as simply part of life would be disastrous, especially if the infection of laziness affected one's spiritual works and afflicted one's spirituality. Truly, "laziness causes a deep sleep to fall, and a slack soul goes hungry." —Prov. 19:15.

5. Explain why God's people need to shun worldly attitudes toward work.

WHY JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES KEEP BUSY

⁶ As you might expect, Jehovah's witnesses are very busy people, but are they to be pitied because they are committed to working hard? They do much private Bible study, attend five weekly congregation meetings and spend much time each month in preaching the good news of God's kingdom and making disciples of people, besides providing support for themselves and their families. Keeping busy, they have the joy and satisfaction of bringing honor to Jehovah's name and bringing comfort to truth seekers and they have the promise of the reward of eternal life. Being busy serves as a protection from many of the temptations and snares of the world, the flesh and the Devil. So when you

visit a congregation of Jehovah's witnesses you will find that they are a happy people and likely the happiest of all among them are those having the most to do in preaching and teaching God's Word to others.—Ps. 144:15; Acts 20:35.

⁷ Another thing that keeps conscientious, hardworking Christians busy is the need to assist their Christian brothers, as well as preparing parts on the various meeting programs, and so forth. Those who are servants in the congregations have still more duties to discharge. What a privilege, bringing to oneself a deep-seated satisfaction, to assist these humble "sheep" of Jehovah's fold, whose gratitude they have. (1 Thess. 5:14; Phil. 2:3,

6. (a) Why are Jehovah's witnesses very busy people? (b) How does keeping busy provide protection and bring happiness?

7. (a) What other necessities require Christians to work hard? (b) Explain why being a servant in the congregation is a privilege and how others should view the servants' hard work.

4; 1 Cor. 10:24, 33; Rom. 15:1, 2) Such hardworking overseers of congregations are deeply appreciated and esteemed by their brothers.—1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7.

⁸ Another reason such ministers have so much to do is that there is so little time left to this system of things; so they must be diligent. "Do not loiter at your business. Be aglow with the spirit. Slave for Jehovah. Rejoice in the hope." The urgency of our times demands that they "work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah." It is a lifesaving work and, as Jesus said on one occasion, "We must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no man can work."—Rom. 12:11, 12; Col. 3:23, 24; John 9:4.

⁹ What a stimulating, refreshing challenge presents itself in this never-to-be-repeated lifesaving work! There is nothing dull, routine or uninteresting in this occupation so that it holds out for youth no appealing prospects for which youth seeks. A report concerning Harvard University's 1970 graduating class says "that students are increasingly uncertain about what to do after college and that many are accepting, even welcoming, manual jobs . . . many recent graduates were taking jobs as taxi drivers, warehousemen, book store clerks and craftsmen because they feared that their identities would be subsumed and their energies misdirected in traditional jobs."—New York Times, March 3, 1971.

¹⁰ Work with the hands is good and satisfying because it brings to the worker the pleasure of accomplishment, but it is not the most meaningful occupation in which a person can be engaged. Man's Creator well knows what works are required to satisfy man and it is most interesting to note what work he directed his Son to per-

form. There came a time when Jesus put aside his secular employment as a carpenter for far more important, infinitely more meaningful pursuits, which he delighted to do. (John 5:17; Ps. 40:8; Heb. 10:7) He did the work Jehovah assigned to him and found it as rewarding and refreshing as food. On one occasion when his disciples urged him to eat he responded: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." At the end of the work he would be refreshed by the joy of accomplishment and have genuine satisfaction.—John 4:34.

HARD WORK BRINGS HAPPINESS

¹¹ "Look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus. For the joy that was set before him he endured," even to the point of a disgraceful death on the torture stake. (Heb. 12:2) His exemplary career was that of hard work in the ministry with happiness. Remember, too, that he emphatically condemned the dilatory, sluggish slave who, at his Lord's coming, proved to have done nothing with the interests left in his charge and had gained nothing. But his illustration shows that work gives its own reward in joyfulness. By diligence the slave caring for five talents doubled them, and the one caring for two talents doubled them. What was their reward? "You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master." What about the lazy slave that would not work? The talent was taken from him, but, instead of rejoicing, he went off weeping. (Matt. 25:14-30) Truly, to be happy one needs to work and take care of responsibility.

¹² Today's youth is increasingly skepti-

8. Give another reason why Christians must work hard.

9. (a) Why is this ministerial work not dull but stimulating? (b) What kind of occupations is today's youth seeking?

10. What work did Jesus take up as a young man, and did it satisfy him?

11. (a) Was Jesus a hard worker, and did his work bring him happiness? (b) What is the point to his illustration at Matthew 25:14-30?

12. (a) What is youth's attitude toward traditional occupations and working hard? (b) What works are vain and what works will bring contentment and happiness?

cal of following traditional occupations, observing that few who do so find pleasure in such pursuit, and the anxieties, neuroses and mental and physical disorders of those who do so proclaim the failure of their course. One cynic expressed his disenchantment waggishly: "Let us work hard and save our money and then, when we are old, we will be able to afford the things only young people enjoy." Long ago Solomon, while faithful to God, was used to write much concerning the frustrations and vanities of man's works, and it might be said that what was written in the book of Ecclesiastes seeks to congregare God's people away from the vain and fruitless works of this world to the works worthy of the God to whom they are dedicated. Materialistic pursuits will prove to be vanity in the end and bring disappointment, but Solomon counsels the young man to remember his grand Creator while he is able to serve him with vigor. Such will result not in vanity but in eternal happiness.—Eccl. 12:1; Ps. 128:1, 2.

¹³ What greater happiness could there be for young or old than to please Jehovah so as to "get saved"? While in his illustration about "a man, about to travel abroad," Jesus informs us that when that "man" returned he had the good-for-nothing slave thrown out, he emphasizes the positive lesson in his illustration, affirming that the diligent slaves may enter into the joy of their master. (Matt. 25: 14-30) Also positive and direct was his response to a certain man who inquired, "Lord, are those who are being saved



We need to take it to heart: The lazy man loses out—not only materially, but also as to having God's approval

few?" By his answer Jesus rules out anything less than wholehearted effort: "Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able." (Luke 13:23, 24) All should give attention to his words, especially giving thought to how they apply to us now and what is meant by *vigorous exertion* on the part of Christians.

¹⁴ When Jesus said that we should exert ourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door he did not infer that many obstacles would be put in our way by the world that would hinder our entrance, but rather that God's own requirements are such that they exclude unworthy ones. Jehovah does not want those not loving righteousness, not whole-souled in their devotion. "I passed along by the field of the lazy individual and by the vineyard of the man in need of heart. And, look! all of it produced weeds. Nettles covered its very surface, and its stone wall itself had been torn down. So I proceeded to behold, I myself; I began taking it to heart; I saw, I took the discipline: A little sleep-

13. (a) What did Jesus emphasize positively in his illustration (Matthew 25:14-30)? (b) Why give attention to Luke 13:23, 24?

14. What is Jesus telling us by advocating vigorous exertion?

ing, a little slumbering, a little folding of the hands to lie down, and as a highwayman your poverty will certainly come and your neediness as an armed man." (Prov. 24:30-34) If a person is not a real worker, will Jehovah preserve him alive into his new system of things?

¹⁵ Christians have every incentive to be genuinely industrious as Christ was, the one before whom they hope to stand approved. They apply themselves with diligence to the end of pleasing him and his Father with the quality of their work. "Have you beheld a man skillful in his work? Before kings is where he will station himself; he will not station himself before commonplace men." (Prov. 22:29) Such one progresses beyond his initial desire to please Jehovah and his first efforts in the ministry by increasing in accurate Bible knowledge and continuing to make spiritual advancement, having the same desire as Jesus' apostles, who said, "Give us more faith."—Luke 17:5; Prov. 27:11.

¹⁶ If vigorous exertion is required to be saved, who will be content to be half-hearted? To the man who inquired about gaining everlasting life, Jesus pointed out that he must love Jehovah with all his heart, mind, soul and strength. (Luke 10:27) What can a man accomplish without much drive or enthusiasm or heart? Nothing worth while comes easy. Half effort does not produce half results but usually no results. The only way to accomplish results that last is by continuous, diligent, **hard** work.

JEHOVAH'S REQUIREMENTS ARE REASONABLE

¹⁷ What Jehovah requires men to do for salvation is not too much. He is not being

unreasonable but generous, kind, loving and thoughtful. He takes no delight in the death of wicked ones and has exercised great patience and forbearance so that man might get saved. His will is that Christians should "go on leading a calm and quiet life with *full godly devotion* and seriousness." (1 Tim. 2:2-4; Ezek. 33:10, 11) Life is a prize, a treasure of inestimable value, which Jehovah bestows upon the worthy ones. The ones who prove their worthiness are wholehearted followers of Christ Jesus. Do you recall what Jesus instructed the young man with many possessions? "Now, look! a certain one came up to him and said: 'Teacher, what good must I do in order to get everlasting life?' Jesus said to him: 'If you want to be perfect, go sell your belongings and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, and come be my follower.'" (Matt. 19:16, 21; Acts 4:12) Since life in full health with untold blessings for all eternity is such a great and grand thing, would it not be more realistic and reasonable for one to appraise it as the man in another of Jesus' illustrations? "The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and for the joy he has he goes and sells what things he has and buys that field."—Matt. 13:44.

¹⁸ Most assuredly, what Jehovah is asking back is reasonable. (Jas. 3:17; Mic. 6:8) Furthermore it is loving and practical, since there are so many appreciative hearers yet to be reached with the "good news of the kingdom." Those who preach it are numerous and growing rapidly in number but those who "observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus" are comparatively few and there still is much to be done as the time left to do it is dwindling.—Matt. 24:14; Rev. 12:17.

15. Why should Christians desire to be industrious, and in what will it result?

16. Explain why wholehearted devotion and work are required by Jehovah.

17. Is Jehovah being unreasonable or requiring too much?

18. Why are such requirements practical and loving?

¹⁹ Sharing in the ministry is a joyful occupation but, because of the magnitude of the task, we should do more than simply have some small share if we are able to do so. *Vigor* is effective energy or strength, potency. Vigorous exertion means to be lively or strong; it is action intensified. Vigor is the antithesis of weakness or lassitude. Do not forget that Christians are to *make disciples*, baptizing them. (Matt. 28:19, 20) To make true disciples is no small thing; it requires persistent, intensified effort for months, perhaps years. But there is great joy in teaching others and seeing them make advancement. Just as devoted, loving parents are ready to help their child to advance toward physical, mental and emotional maturity, so the Christian witnesses of Jehovah are anxious to help Bible students make progress and they experience a unique joy in seeing persons with whom they study the Bible advance in knowledge and understanding to the point of also becoming active servants of God.

²⁰ Because the early Christians followed their Exemplar they were very energetic workers, truly zealous evangelizers. From Pentecost of 33 C.E. when Peter

19. Define vigorous exertion and explain why it is necessary.

20. Were early Christians zealous, and what resulted?



Do you exert yourself vigorously to call back on interested persons, making disciples?

“bore thorough witness and kept exhorting them,” with the result that 3,000 persons were added *that day*, Christianity was a dynamic force pushed with vigor and fearlessness. Opposition and persecution arose but the Christians persisted boldly. “Also, with great power the apostles continued giving forth the witness concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and undeserved kindness in large measure was upon them all.” Miraculously freed from prison and urged by Jehovah’s angel to continue, the apostles were charged with having filled Jerusalem with their teaching. Even though beaten and forbidden to do so, they persisted without letup in their teaching and preaching, “rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name. And every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus.” (Acts 2:40; 4:33; 5:28, 41, 42) When scattered by persecution, the Christians “went through the land declaring the good news” and, “indeed, the congregation throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria entered into a period of peace, being built up; and as it walked in the fear of Jehovah and in the comfort of the holy spirit it kept on multiplying.” (Acts 8:4; 9:31) What busy and exciting but joyful times those were for Christians!

MODERN CHRISTIANS REVITALIZED

²¹ In modern times the spirit of vigorous exertion characteristic of the early Christians has been restored and revitalized. How would the ancient prophecy be fulfilled: “Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your military force”? (Ps. 110:2, 3) Jehovah’s King Son is now enthroned in power and has been ‘subduing in the midst of his enemies.’

21. What spirit characterizes the activity of Jehovah’s witnesses in modern times?

A modern historian takes a wide view of the activity of Christian witnesses of our day, observing: "Jehovah's Witnesses have literally covered the earth with their witnessing . . . It may be truly said that no single religious group in the world displayed more zeal and persistence in the attempt to spread the good news of the Kingdom than the Jehovah's Witnesses." —*These Also Believe*, by C. S. Braden (New York, 1950: The Macmillan Co.), p. 370.

²² Jehovah's people had literally expanded their preaching in modern times to the four corners of the earth, but the efforts about which historian Braden commented were only the beginning. Still to come was what *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* (Brooklyn, New York, 1959: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society) discloses: "So, especially from 1945 onward, global expansion was truly under way. The time had come for countless more of the great multitude to manifest themselves, and they kept coming into association with the New World society literally by the thousands to join in the preaching work. The door to theocratic service was now wide open, for a few years at least, and this united company of zealous heralds of the good news of God's kingdom were streaming through it in droves into the rich fields ready and waiting to be harvested." (P. 221) No spiritual drowsiness here, and what a blessed, happy time has been enjoyed by those who have shared to the full in the global expansion work!

²³ To serve Jehovah with faithfulness and zeal involves work, no question about it. His servants continue to exert themselves vigorously without letup, and his blessing continues to be poured out upon

them. They lead busy and happy lives without monotony or boredom, grateful for their service privileges and happy to be busy. They have dedicated their entire lives to Jehovah and are determined to be truly whole-souled in his service, knowing that if they do so they will get life. (Luke 10:27, 28) It is not material possessions, personal comforts or ease that claim first place in their lives, with but minimum effort in the Christian ministry. Awake to developments of these "last days," they take the hardworking course James advocated, as a farmer who looks ahead to his harvest with patient anticipation. "Exercise patience, therefore, brothers, until the presence of the Lord. Look! the farmer keeps waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, exercising patience over it until he gets the early rain and the late rain. You too exercise patience; make your hearts firm, because the presence of the Lord has drawn close." —Jas. 5:7, 8.

²⁴ "Exert yourselves vigorously," exhorts Jesus to all who want to get saved. "Do not loiter at your business," echoes Paul, reminding Christians of its urgency. This is the way to maintain joy in Jehovah, taking hold with your hands and doing with your power what has to be done while you have life. Then, whether you live on, not experiencing death's sting before Jehovah ushers in his glorious new system of things, or fall asleep in death awaiting the resurrection, Jehovah will remember you with a "perfect wage." "Consequently, my beloved brothers, become steadfast, unmovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord." —Ruth 2:12; 1 Cor. 15:58; Eccl. 9:7, 10.

22. What can be said about the recent global expansion of the work?

23. Why will Jehovah's witnesses continue to work hard with patience?

24. What is the way to maintain joy in Jehovah, and what will be the outcome?

DO NOT BEG OFF

BUT

Be Industrious Down to the End

"Show the same industriousness so as to have the full assurance of the hope down to the end."—Heb. 6:11.

APPRECIATION for all that Jehovah has done for him calls forth the desire in a Christian to respond so as to please his God. Peter writes this to his brothers in his second letter, reminding them concerning requirements for divine approval and entrance into Kingdom blessings. "Forasmuch as his divine power has given us freely all the things that concern life and godly devotion . . . Through these things he has freely given us the precious and very grand promises, that through these you may become sharers in divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust. Yes, for this very reason, by your contributing in response all *earnest effort*, supply to your faith virtue," knowledge, self-control, endurance, godly devotion, brotherly affection and love. (2 Pet. 1:3-7) The appreciative Christian will want to progress, making a contribution of earnest effort toward that end.

² The objective or target of such earnest effort by Christians, says Peter, is a most worthy goal. "For if these things exist in you and overflow, they will prevent you from being either inactive or unfruitful." (2 Pet. 1:8) It is possible to fall away, but what is a safeguard against it? One thing important is to keep very busy in the ministry! Never let up right down to the end! "For God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you

have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering. But we desire each one of you to show the same industriousness so as to have the full assurance of the hope down to the end, in order that you may not become sluggish, but be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."—Heb. 6:10-12.

³ Later in his letter to the Christian congregation at Jerusalem he discusses why this must be so. Christians are in a position superior to that of the Israelites who received the Law through Moses. (Heb. 12:18-21) They are not approaching merely a literal mountain but a heavenly Zion and Jerusalem, an assembly of angels, the congregation of the first-born, God the Judge of all and Jesus the Mediator. This could have most serious consequences for those involved, as God will shake both earth and heaven to remove all shakable things. (Heb. 12:22-27) Against this background they are told they must not beg off. "See that you do not beg off from him who is speaking. For if they did not escape who begged off from him who was giving divine warning upon earth, much more shall we not if we turn away from him who speaks from the heavens. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, saying: 'Yet once more I will set in commotion not only the earth but also the heaven.' Now the expression 'Yet once more' signifies the removal of the things being shaken as things that have been made, in

1. Explain how the Christian who appreciates God's gifts will respond.

2. What is a safeguard against possibly falling away?

3. What is the setting described at Hebrews 12:18-27, and what warning is given?

order that the things not being shaken may remain."—Vss. 25-27.

⁴ A dedicated Christian must not take his responsibilities lightly, therefore. Jehovah will hold him accountable. This principle Jesus illustrated by the words and actions of a man's two sons. "Going up to the first, he said, 'Child, go work today in the vineyard.' In answer this one said, 'I will, sir,' but did not go out. Approaching the second, he said the same. In reply this one said, 'I will not.' Afterwards he felt regret and went out. Which of the two did the will of his father?"—Matt. 21:28-31.

⁵ It is a common thing for man to beg off from all responsibility to his fellowman as well as to God. What a refreshing difference to have association with true Christians who know Jehovah's will for them and industriously carry it out! Like ancient Jerusalem, they heed his encouraging command: "May your hands not drop down. Jehovah your God is in the midst of you. As a mighty One, he will save. He will exult over you with rejoicing." (Zeph. 3:16, 17) Joy abounds with his busy people because of such blessing and prosperity. It is Jehovah who backs up and strengthens those who work at doing his will.—Phil. 4:13.

SOME MAKE EXCUSES

⁶ Many are the ways in which people keep begging off from accepting responsibility. Fallen human nature is to follow the line of least resistance, so it is a common thing to hear of fathers who fail to support their families and even mothers who abandon unwanted infants, as numberless teen-age unwed fathers also do who bring children into the world without assuming the responsibility of marriage.

Even dedicated Christians need to guard against this common tendency to excuse oneself from life's obligations.

⁷ Trying to excuse oneself from what one ought to do or giving less of oneself than promised usually results from faulty, human reasoning. This was the case with Peter, who once even entreated Jesus to excuse himself. His intentions may have been good but how poorly advised! "Jesus Christ commenced showing his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the older men and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised up. At this Peter took him aside and commenced rebuking him, saying: 'Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all.' But, turning his back, he said to Peter: 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God's thoughts, but those of men.'" (Matt. 16:21-23) Yes, discern Jehovah's will and then do not hold back from doing it. "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight."—Prov. 3:5, 6.

⁸ At times this begging off may be known only to oneself and God. Probably that was the case with Jonah when he ran away from his appointment of service, his commission to warn the great city of Nineveh of impending doom. (Jonah 1:1-3:10) But Jehovah did not permit him to get away with it. Disciplined, Jonah listened to God the second time and "got up and went to Nineveh in accord with the word of Jehovah." What dramatic, spectacular events resulted! "The men of Nineveh began to put faith in God, and they proceeded to proclaim a fast and to

4. How is the principle of accountability illustrated?
5. (a) What encouragement is given not to beg off?
(b) Who supplies the necessary backing and strength?
6. In what ways do some keep excusing themselves from obligations?

7. (a) What kind of reasoning results in begging off?
(b) Whose will must always be done?
8. From what happened to Jonah, what is to be learned about begging off?

put on sackcloth, from the greatest one of them even to the least one of them. And the true God got to see their works, that they had turned back from their bad way; and so the true God felt regret over the calamity that he had spoken of causing to them; and he did not cause it." (Jonah 3:5, 10) Probably it may not mean the saving of an entire city, but willingness to carry out an assignment from Jehovah is always the course of wisdom.

⁹ Loyally stick to your work if you have dedicated your life to Jehovah. Do not be guilty of a Jonah-like running away or abandoning your post. A news report at

As Jesus showed, those who
"beg off" from responding to
God's invitation do so
with flimsy excuses



hand says that 800 or so Roman Catholic priests, brothers and nuns are leaving the active ministry each year in the United States alone. A typical comment made by one is: "The present forms of ministry are not viable [capable of living, growing, de-

9, 10. Why should one stick to the ministry, unlike whom?

veloping; not dead or malformed] for me. I have to find a form that is." (New York *Times*, March 8, 1969) The serious impact of this trend was observed in the Long Island *Press* of September 27, 1971: "Unless current trends are reversed, the Catholic priesthood in the United States 'will have an imbalance of older men' and may not 'survive as a viable force in our society.' . . . In 1970, for every 10 ordinations there were 23 priests lost."

¹⁰ Another kind of begging off is disclosed in a special dispatch to the New York *Times* from Rome dated April 27, 1971, headlined "More Priests Urged for Rome's Slums." "The vicar [of Rome, Cardinal Dellacqua] noted that at least 8,000 Roman Catholic priests were residents of this metropolis of nearly three million people and 500 churches, but that only a dozen clergymen were ministering to its sprawling shantytowns."



THE "GRAND EVENING MEAL"

¹¹ What it means to beg off, Jesus explains in the parable of a grand evening meal: "A certain man was spreading a grand evening meal, and he invited many. And he sent his slave out at the hour of

the evening meal to say to the invited ones, 'Come, because things are now ready.' But they all in common started to beg off. The first said to him, 'I bought a field



11. How does Jesus' parable of a grand evening meal, in Luke 14, apply?

and need to go out and see it; I ask you, Have me excused.' And another said, 'I bought five yoke of cattle and am going to examine them; I ask you, Have me excused.' Still another said, 'I just married a wife and for this reason I cannot come.' Many had been invited but, unwilling to come, they "started to beg off," they invented excuses. One said he had to examine the cattle he had purchased. Well, what man of the country would buy livestock, especially draft animals, unseen, unsuspected? So, undeceived, the "certain man" saw right through their flimsy excuses; they were merely begging off.—Luke 14:16-20.

¹² Putting all excuses aside, we should let our service to Jehovah come first if we are whole-souled. However, a few hours in the field ministry may be very pleasing to Jehovah if that is what we are able to do. Once Jesus watched as persons deposited money in the temple's treasury chests. Rich individuals dropped in many coins, but he was most impressed with the wholehearted generosity of a needy widow who dropped in only two small coins of very little value. (Mark 12:41-44) Not all are able to do the same amount in the field ministry, and in the case of some, an hour or two may be a generous contribution.

¹³ A forthright appraisal of one's abilities, means and circumstances after dedicating one's life to Jehovah may lead to entering the pioneer ministry. Many, moved by love for Jehovah and a desire to carry out their dedication to the full, have been

greatly blessed by taking this step. Others, not content to have just some small part in the preaching and teaching work, are able to move out and serve where help is specially needed and results are bountiful. Living conditions may be more primitive and distances that must be traveled may be large, but despite such added exertion, even hardships, Jehovah blesses those who thus take the initiative to prove their love for him and he provides the strength to accomplish the work.—2 Cor. 4:7;

1 Cor. 2:4, 5; Eph. 3:20, 21.

¹⁴ All of us, whether we have years of experience behind us or are new, are encouraged to 'carry our own load.' (Gal. 6:5) Have you been studying the Bible for just a few months and now learned something about the divine requirements of dedication and baptism? 'That will mean work for me,' you say; 'it will cost me something in time and effort.' True, and is it worth it? Besides, 'Should I not count the



Are you really industrious in the field ministry, or is yours a mere token service?

cost?' Yes, no one wants to start something he will not be able to finish. (Luke 14:28-30) But by strong exhortation and forceful illustrations Jesus urged Christians to be progressive, to view service opportunities as privileges and not to consider token service in the ministry enough.—See "Your Word Is a Lamp to My Foot," pages 186-192.

VERY BUSY BUT HAPPY

¹⁵ Admittedly, the life of a Christian is not one of idleness, but it is a satisfying, happy life. Paul's course is exemplary. Acts 14:20-22 tells of some of his blessed experiences: "He left with Barnabas for

12. Explain the lesson to be learned from what the generous needy widow contributed.

13. What can result if one willingly assumes responsibility in serving Jehovah?

14. (a) How can each one carry his own load? (b) Illustrate the reason why one should count the cost.

15. What is to be learned from Paul's experiences?

Derbe. And after declaring the good news to that city and making quite a few disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to remain in the faith." An indefatigable worker, Paul seemed never to yield to weariness. What an outstanding record of industriousness! (2 Cor. 11:23-27) Never shirking hard work, and suffering many hardships, he lived through all, rejoicing: "For my part I will most gladly spend and be completely spent for your souls. If I love you the more abundantly, am I to be loved the less?" (2 Cor. 12:15) Hardships and suffering did not rob him of happiness or make him discontented. He was sustained and refreshed by his privileges and accomplishments and quick to give credit to others who worked hard also.—2 Tim. 4:7, 8; Rom. 16:12.

¹⁶ Then, brothers, do you accept responsibility in the field ministry, and in rendering aid to your brothers in the congregation, doing so willingly, gladly, or do you excuse yourself and beg off? This is an issue for each to face personally, individually. Are you quick to accept an assignment of a part in the congregation meetings? When assigned, do you faithfully follow through, fully prepare, rehearse and appreciatively present your portion of the congregation meeting? No doubt you do, and you certainly are to be commended. Your loving efforts will be greatly appreciated by your brothers in the congregation. Meeting participation is

16. What are some of the ways in which a person can accept responsibility?

Our overseers serve so willingly. Why am I holding back? Why don't I apply myself to meet the requirements so I too can be of greater service to my brothers?



valuable to all, strengthening and upbuilding, even if merely a well-considered voluntary comment or answer to a question.—Heb. 10:23-25.

¹⁷ How have you responded to the opportunity in

your congregation to reach out for the office of overseer, indeed a fine work? (1 Tim. 3:1) Have you taken steps to be qualified and made yourself willingly, eagerly available? Probably your willingness has been or will be observed and acted upon, to your further blessing, and you will most certainly find yourself doing good work, being rich in right works. "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd has been made manifest, you will receive the unfadable crown of glory."—1 Pet. 5:2-4; 1 Tim. 6:17, 18.

NOW THE TIME TO "EXERT YOURSELVES"

¹⁸ From our Bible study we have learned that we are living deep in the "time of the end." On every hand we find evidence to corroborate what the Bible tells us about its shortness. It is hardly the time for a Christian to beg off. Rather he should have an attitude of eager willingness, progressive willingness to give of himself. Why should he put a limit on what Jehovah may ask of him when he owes Jehovah so much?

17. How can a brother respond to additional opportunities in the congregation?

18. Because of the lateness of time, what attitude should a Christian have?

¹⁹ The Bible's counsel for Christians to be industrious down to the end and not become sluggish is most practical. We must not disregard it, becoming reluctant to do our full, reasonable share in the field ministry, balking at every suggestion for our progress in service to our brothers and assisting with the needs of the congregation or always failing to volunteer for service opportunities. "God loves a cheerful giver," we are told, and the giving Jehovah loves most is of those who wholeheartedly give of themselves in his service. (2 Cor. 9:6, 7) Your giving of yourself will produce results that will invigorate and refresh you. In *Daily Life in Bible Times*, after reviewing some features of Paul's strenuous schedule, the writer observes: "One wonders when he found time to eat and sleep." (P. 308) But the author does not miss the point, commenting shortly: "All this incessant toil brought results."—By A. E. Bailey (New York, 1943: Charles Scribner's Sons).

²⁰ When Jesus initiated the Christian ministry he stated: "The harvest, indeed, is great, but the workers are few. Therefore beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." Those first seventy had a very happy time and "returned with joy." (Luke 10:2, 17) Hundreds of thousands are now following in their path and the diligent ones continue to find joy in the ministry. "If you know these things, happy you are if you do them." "He who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and who persists in it, this man, because he has become, not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, will be happy in his doing it."—John 13:17; Jas. 1:25.

19. (a) In what ways should one not beg off? (b) What giving does Jehovah love most, and what will it accomplish?

20. What assurances are there that hard work in the ministry brings joy to the industrious one?

²¹ Whereas human living abounds with vain works, works relating to true worship are not in vain and will not be frustrated or come to nothing. (Eccl. 2:10, 11) When we depend upon Jehovah God, our works are certain to succeed. "Unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have worked hard on it." (Ps. 127:1) The wise person will conclude as did Solomon: "Roll your works upon Jehovah himself and your plans will be firmly established." (Prov. 16:3) Jehovah notices and keeps account of our labors of love and he gives us this foreglimpse of his promised reward if we do not beg off: "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be; and the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full. They will not toil for nothing, nor will they bring to birth for disturbance; because they are the offspring made up of the chosen ones of Jehovah, and their descendants with them."—Isa. 65:21-23; see also Leviticus 26:3-5; Deuteronomy 28:4.

²² Meanwhile, hard work in the field ministry and with your congregation will not wear you out but it will keep you alive, healthy in the faith, happy and refreshed. "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light."—Matt. 11:28-30.

21. (a) How can one avoid engaging in vain works?

(b) What reward is promised to those not begging off?

22. Who has invited us to be his disciples, and if we respond how will it turn out with us?

²³ These have proved to be the "critical times hard to deal with" and men generally are pleasure lovers rather than lovers of God and godly works. (2 Tim. 3:1, 4, 5) For your protection keep busy in the ministry. "Indeed, who is the man that will harm you if you become zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer

23. (a) What can we do for protection in these critical times? (b) Why will we continue to work hard and exert ourselves?

for the sake of righteousness, you are happy. However, the object of their fear do not you fear, neither become agitated." (1 Pet. 3:13, 14) Do not beg off; keep up your vigorous exertion. "For to this end we are working hard and exerting ourselves, because we have rested our hope on a living God, who is a Savior of all sorts of men, especially of faithful ones." —1 Tim. 4:10.

Does SEXUAL MORALITY Make Sense?

MANY persons today feel that having sex relations outside of marriage makes sense. Young persons are increasingly prominent among these.

Those who hold firm against this because of sticking to moral standards are often viewed with a measure of pity or even scorn as old-fashioned, weak, naïve or unsophisticated. Are they? What do the facts show?

IS THE "NEW MORALITY" REALLY NEW?

Really, there is nothing new or "modern" about sexual looseness. It has been around for a long, long time. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah practiced it nearly two thousand years before the birth of Jesus. If you read the history of the old Roman Empire you will see that it was notable for sexual looseness of all the kinds carried on today. In fact, its fall came

Helpful facts that young people want to know

it is now so widespread rather than being localized, and that it has become so prominent in lands pretending to be Christian.

You may have read articles on the subject saying that the present wave of sexual "freedom" results from the modern development of contraceptives, supposedly freeing persons of the fear of pregnancies outside of marriage. Or that medical progress in thwarting venereal diseases has aided toward sexual "freedom." Are we naïve if we do not go along with these explanations? Again, what are the facts?

The facts are that unwanted pregnancies are more abundant now than ever. The number of illegitimate children steadily rises, and this is true in the so-called "progressive" countries where contraceptives are widely used. In the United States, for example, about one out of every twelve

largely because of moral deterioration.

So why should we think the so-called "New Morality" of today has anything really new about it? It is the same old thing, the only unusual aspects being that

births is illegitimate; in Sweden it is about one out of every seven.

Add to this the tremendous number of abortions performed, about a million every year in the United States alone. So it is easy to see that contraceptives do not give "guaranteed" freedom from pregnancy. It is naïve to think otherwise.

Moreover, medical authorities in many lands are concerned at seeing venereal diseases spread at epidemic rate, with an outstanding number of victims among young persons in their teens. In the United States syphilis now ranks second only to tuberculosis among the communicable diseases causing most deaths. Medical authorities say that modern drugs are proving ineffective in stopping the growth of both gonorrhea and syphilis. And all too often those affected realize it too late to avoid serious and irreversible damage to their bodies. Why risk the chance of suffering permanent damage, perhaps even blindness or sterility as a result of immorality?

MORALITY A SIGN OF WEAKNESS?

Is it a sign of weakness for one to refuse to enter sexual relations before marriage? Well, which would you say takes more strength, to give in to passion or to contain it?

Actually, any weakling can give in to the sex urge. But it takes a real "man" (or a real "woman") to control that urge until taking a mate in marriage. It takes even more strength now when the global trend is going the other way; it means bucking the current, fighting against the stream.

The Bible book of Proverbs presents an account illustrating this point. It relates the way a young man from among the "inexperienced ones," lacking in good heart motive, wanders down into a section where he is approached by a prostitute. Under the pressure of her shrewd per-

suasiveness, he caves in and "all of a sudden he is going after her, like a bull that comes even to the slaughter, and just as if fettered [or shackled] for the discipline of a foolish man." (Prov. 7:6-23) He did not have the moral strength to resist.

By contrast, the Song of Solomon gives us a picture of an attractive young maiden of Shunem who resisted all the enticements that a wealthy king could offer, preferring to remain true to the young shepherd she hoped to marry. Yes, instead of being like a "door" that could easily be swung open, she proved to her older brothers that she was as firm as a "wall" in her determination to keep her virginity for the man she was waiting for.—Song of Sol. 8:8-10.

WHY SEXUAL MORALITY MAKES SENSE

The main reason sexual morality makes sense is that it is the way set out by the One who knows the most about human happiness, the One who, in fact, made sexual relations possible: Jehovah God. As our Life-giver he has the right to tell us what to do, to set forth rules of conduct as to the use of our procreative organs with their life-transmitting powers.

Through the apostle Paul, God tells us: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Heb. 13:4) Fornication includes not only promiscuous sex relations with just anyone—it also includes premarital sex, as between persons who are engaged but not married.

God's Word is very definite in condemning fornication and other loose conduct. It says that persons practicing such things will have no part in God's kingdom. (Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5) This positiveness of God's law is really for our good. The sexual urges can be very strong, and occasions come in the life of most persons when

it would be easy to give in under the pressure of temptation. If God's law on the matter were vague or weak it certainly would not help us much in those times. But because it is so clear and forceful it helps us to keep our senses, bolsters our moral courage and, most important, it helps us to learn to *hate* the wrong course. Do you hate the course of sexual immorality? Why should you?

If that course at times seems appealing, ask yourself: 'Would I want those of my own family to engage in it, my parents or my brothers and sisters? Would I want them to have illegitimate children? Would this increase my love and respect for them?' If not, then is not that course worth hating?

What of children born from such an immoral course? Suppose you had such a child—who would care for it? Your mother and father? You yourself? How would you do it? And how would the child feel when it grows up and finds out how it was conceived? Or if you refused to shoulder the responsibility and you put the child up for adoption, how would other people feel about you? How would you feel about yourself? You might try to cover up the birth, then put the child out of sight by giving it up for adoption and thus try to run away from shame and responsibility. But you can never run away from yourself, can you?

Really, what good has ever come from the course of sexual immorality? Why is it that so many undesirable things are associated with it, including crippling venereal diseases, abortions, jealous fights and even murders? Why is it that in lands where great sexual "freedom" is allowed, as in Denmark and Sweden, the divorce rates are among the highest in the world? Does divorce spell success or failure? Is it a sign of true happiness or of unhappiness and dissatisfaction?

Sexual morality also makes sense because those who hold to it have a far better likelihood of a successful marriage. This is because they have kept marriage in high regard, respecting God's arrangement and respecting their future mates and their mutual right to receive a clean partner in marriage.—Compare 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:26, 27.

In fact, the more careful you are to avoid loose conduct or the taking of liberties during courtship and engagement periods, the more likely will be your success in marriage. Then neither you nor your mate will have nagging doubts of the genuineness of the other's love due to suspicion that sex was the sole motive for marrying. For marriage, after all, is not just a union of two bodies—it is a union of two *persons*. And there must be mutual high regard and love for the *person* if the marriage is to bring lasting happiness.

MAKING A WISE CHOICE WITH ENDURING RESULTS

Love based on passion is not an enduring love. It is a selfish, greedy love. That kind of love is well illustrated in the case of one of David's sons named Amnon. He "fell in love" with his beautiful half sister Tamar. Then through trickery he forced her into having relations with him. After that, what? The record tells us: "And Amnon began hating her with a very great hatred, because the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her." He sent her out into the street. (2 Sam. 13:1-19) Now, if you are a young girl, should you naïvely think that because some boy expresses passionate love for you and wants you to have relations with him that this means he sincerely loves you? He may very well turn out to be just as Amnon was.

The wife of Egyptian officer Potiphar expressed the same kind of interest in

young Joseph. When he resisted all her attempts to seduce him, she then showed her true colors. She viciously lied to her husband about Joseph, causing him to be unjustly imprisoned.—Gen. 39:7-20.

Yes, so-called sexual “freedom” changes what should be beautiful and clean into something cheap and detestable.

So, which do you want—an occasional brief moment of illicit sexual pleasure with all the risks and problems it involves, or the satisfaction of having a clean conscience before God and all persons, with self-respect, day in and day out?

If you want to stay free from immorality, then stay free from the things that lead to it: conversation that always dwells

on the opposite sex, reading material or pictures that have only one aim—to excite sexual passion. In their place keep your mind, your eyes and your tongue occupied with positive things, working toward worthwhile goals that bring enduring benefits and that leave no shame or heartache.

Above all, strengthen your knowledge and appreciation of your Creator and of the rightness and wisdom of his ways and purposes. Look to him in prayer and fix your heart on the things he promises to those who serve him. You can hold firmly to the course of sexual morality if you really want to, for Jehovah God and his Son will give you the strength you need to do it.

Kindness Has Power

IS IT not a pleasure to be around people who are kind and considerate? Yes, kindness has a good effect on others. Jehovah's Christian witnesses have found that their following the Bible's admonition to be kind toward all has aided many to come to an accurate knowledge of the truth.—Rom. 12:20; Col. 3:12.

This was the experience of a young Witness in Hong Kong. She enjoyed playing ball with her classmates at school, but noted that one of them could not participate in the games due to a physical handicap. Moved with pity for her classmate, the young Witness brought a book that the handicapped girl could read during the games. The book was a Bible study aid entitled “The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life.” The kind and thoughtful gesture pleased the handicapped girl. She read with interest God's promises about a new system, where physical handicaps will be a thing of the past. This girl now enjoys attending the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses.

During a vacation in France, a Witness from Belgium saw kindness bring unexpected results. While at a camp, he observed that a Moslem girl was having difficulty in getting water from a pump. Rather than offering assistance, a

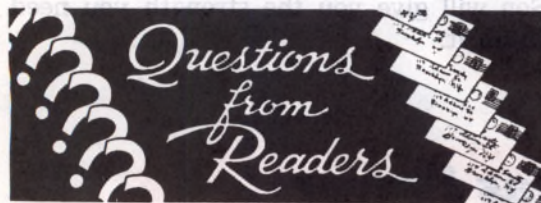
group of people on the balcony of a dance hall made fun of the girl. The Witness approached her, showing her how to use the pump. His attitude so impressed the girl that she stopped by at his tent to thank him, adding: “You are so different from the others. Why?” The Witness and his wife explained that, as Christians, their love was not limited. The girl hurriedly returned to her tent to tell her family about what had happened.

A half hour later, accompanied by her brothers, sisters and friends, the girl again came to the tent of the Witness, extending an invitation to him and his wife to spend the evening with them. Thereafter, for a period of two weeks, the Witness, on repeated occasions, spoke to these people about the Bible. Then contact was lost, for they moved to another camp farther away. However, addresses had been exchanged and, therefore, the Witness eventually learned what results came from his act of kindness.

In the more distant camp the Moslem family had Jehovah's witnesses as neighbors and therefore were enabled to learn still more about the Holy Scriptures. According to recent information, two sons and the daughter are

already sharing in the door-to-door ministry of Jehovah's witnesses. The parents are at the point of wanting to do likewise.

The power of showing kindness toward those who oppose the truth of the Bible is illustrated in what happened to a Witness in Honduras. Sometime ago an army sergeant tried to force him to join the army, even threatening to kill him. Eventually this sergeant lost his position and thus had to look for a job. He was hired as a helper in one of the local mining operations. It so happened that the Witness whom he had mistreated was engaged in the same secular work. Unacquainted with past events, the employer assigned this man to work under the direction of the Witness.



● Often there is much discussion about what is "proper" and what is "improper" in the matter of dress. Can we really set any rules on this? If not, why show so much concern? —U.S.A.

The Bible itself does not give any detailed description as to what is "proper" dress. On the other hand, it supplies us with all we need in order to be fully satisfied about the properness of our clothing. How?

In the very first book of the Bible we are provided with a standard. The record there shows that the matter of dress posed no problem for the first human pair in their sinless state. Only after their transgression, when they began to experience shame and guilt, did they clothe themselves. With what? The account says they made "loin coverings" of fig leaves. (Gen. 3:6, 7) Is that the standard for us?

No, for God evidently viewed these garments as unsuitable. Though ejecting the human pair from their garden home as willful violators of his law, in his undeserved kindness God saw fit to supply them with clothing. Genesis 3:21 says: "And Jehovah God proceeded to make long garments of skin for Adam and for his wife and to clothe them." So, man's Creator not only treated these humans with

The ex-sergeant became very fearful, believing that the Witness would repay him with evil. But the Witness treated his former persecutor with kindness, sharing his lunch with him. This very much impressed the man. He just could not get over the fact that he was being treated kindly by someone whose life he had threatened. Gradually this moved him to take a real interest in the Bible. Now the people whom he formerly despised are his friends and he studies the Scriptures with them.

That kindness can bring about such transformations in people testifies to its power. It should also serve as an incentive to heed the Bible's counsel to manifest kindness.

dignity—lawbreakers though they were—but thereby also provided a standard for human dress.

How long were these "long garments"? The Hebrew word used is understood to denote long garments reaching to the knees, or even to the ankles. Does this authorize condemning any dress whose length does not fall precisely within those two points, the knees and the ankles? No, for that would be trying to read into the expression "long garments" a preciseness or specificity that simply is not there. It could lead to such futile arguments as: Our determining whether dress comes to the bottom of the knee, the middle or the top of it, as the dividing line between proper and improper dress. It would be missing the main point of the standard set. What is that?

It is that the garments were "long" in contrast with the short "loin coverings." So, they gave, not just bare coverage, but good coverage to the body.

There is no reason to doubt that those who thereafter sought to please God were guided by this standard in their dress. In fact, it seems to have been a general standard among mankind. What evidence we have of clothing styles in ancient times serves to confirm this.

This same standard evidently carried over into the Christian congregation in the first century C.E. The apostle Paul wrote that women should "adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind." (1 Tim. 2:9) The Greek word (*ka-ta-sto-le'*) for "dress" here literally means "a letting down." (The simpler term *sto-le'* refers basic-

ly to a long, loose garment; compare Mark 16:5; Luke 15:22; Revelation 7:9.) Whatever their style, such garments clearly provided good coverage.

Why did God provide the standard he did? It was definitely for man's benefit, as are all God's acts. Due to sin, humans are subject to passion and easily incline to immorality. Humans who seek to please God have to fight against their wrong tendencies in this respect. By the standard he set in clothing Adam and Eve, God, in love, kindly provided one way to make this fight somewhat easier.

Not that circumstances might not allow for using other types of clothing on occasion. Certain types of work would make the customary long garb impractical—such as the work of fishermen, which is what some of Jesus' early disciples were. So, in some types of work, and in other activities (such as swimming), shorter clothing might reasonably be used. (Compare John 21:3, 7.) But from our own experience we must admit that, when the reason and purpose for using such clothing is evident, the effect on the observer is not the same as when there is no apparent reason or need for its use. What God did in clothing Adam and Eve, however, serves as a fundamental standard to guide us. And, as shown, that clothing was better described as "long" than as "short."

One might say, But if there are no specific details, how are we to know whether clothing is modest or immodest, whether it is too short or too tight or otherwise objectionable?

God's Word was written to be understood by persons of normal intelligence. If a father tells his son not to hit his little sister or not to shout at her, does the boy take that to mean that he should not even touch his sister or talk to her? Does it take much intelligence to know the difference? Could not even a child know when he was simply giving a friendly pat as compared to a blow designed to hurt, or speaking normally as compared to shouting? If we can understand the difference in degrees in such matters, why should it be difficult for any of us to apply the Bible's standards on clothing, to know whether something is moderate or extreme, well fitting or tight, modest or vain?

If we are unsure, why not notice others around us? Within a congregation of genuine Christians there are plenty of persons who very evidently manifest God's spirit in their lives and show real appreciation for the coun-

sel of his Word. How does our clothing compare with theirs?

Really, our major concern as to clothing is to be sure that we are fulfilling the two most important rules of all: love for God and love for our neighbor as for ourselves. Since we do love ourselves, it is natural and proper that we please ourselves in the way we dress. But we should not do this to the exclusion of pleasing others at the same time. Even if we had the right to do so, love would keep us from ignoring their feelings and interests. (1 Cor. 10:24; 13:4, 5; Phil. 2:4) In fact, much of our enjoyment of dress should come from feeling that others find our appearance pleasant.

Of course, many persons today are pleased with immodesty. Dressing to please them would draw their attention—and even their propositions. It could lead to our stumbling into something like fornication, adultery or even homosexuality. No one should be so naïve as to think this is not so. So, then, in your heart whom are you trying to please?

Equally of concern is the danger of inciting someone else to stumble into immorality. Christ Jesus said: "Whoever stumbles one of these little ones that believe, it would be finer for him if a millstone such as is turned by an ass were put around his neck and he were actually pitched into the sea." (Mark 9:42) Anyone who wore clothing designed to provoke passion in another could become guilty of stumbling a fellow Christian. Is this to say that God would commit to destruction someone just because of the shortness or tightness of his or her clothing? No; rather it would be because the person's provocative dress is due to shortness on love for righteousness and because, instead, it reveals that his or her heart has a love of what is bad in God's eyes.

Actually, if God's Word gave us specific and detailed description and rules on what to wear, the whole matter would resolve down simply to our compliance or noncompliance therewith. As it is, the rules God has given us put to the test what we are *inside*, what is in our heart, with its associated faculty of conscience, and how much consideration we have for the spiritual welfare of others.

So, the entire question reduces down to this: If you had reason to believe that your dress was objectionable, not to just one or two individuals, but to many persons, particularly those whom you love—your family, your brothers in the faith—would you change? Would

you want to do so? And, even more important, if you had reason to believe that the effect of your appearance could be harmful to others because of the type of thinking it encouraged in their minds and hearts, would you sincerely regret that fact and be quick to correct it?

Of course, there are those who can make rules concerning dress. Who are these? Husbands and fathers. All the members of a man's household bear his name and what they do reflects on his name. As the God-appointed family head, he can properly rule out certain clothing as objectionable.

Do we consider the difficult job parents have today in trying to protect their children from widespread delinquency? Then we will not willingly undercut or undermine their efforts by lack of concern about the modesty of our dress. Why make their difficult struggle all the harder?

What about the body of elders or overseers in a congregation? Beyond the rules contained

in the Bible, they cannot set rules as to what those in the congregation will wear. But they can use their own knowledge, understanding and wisdom in determining whether someone is clearly setting a bad example or not in regard to the Scriptural principles regarding dress. They may decide not to give prominence to such one in assignments they extend to others to represent or serve the congregation in congregational meetings. Such action would be governed not simply by the preferences or prejudices of one or two persons but by the judgment of the body of elders in weighing any objections raised.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

May 14: "Exert Yourselves Vigorously"! Page 205. Songs to Be Used: 3, 51.

May 21: Do Not Beg Off, But Be Industrious Down to the End. Page 212. Songs to Be Used: 55, 32.

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