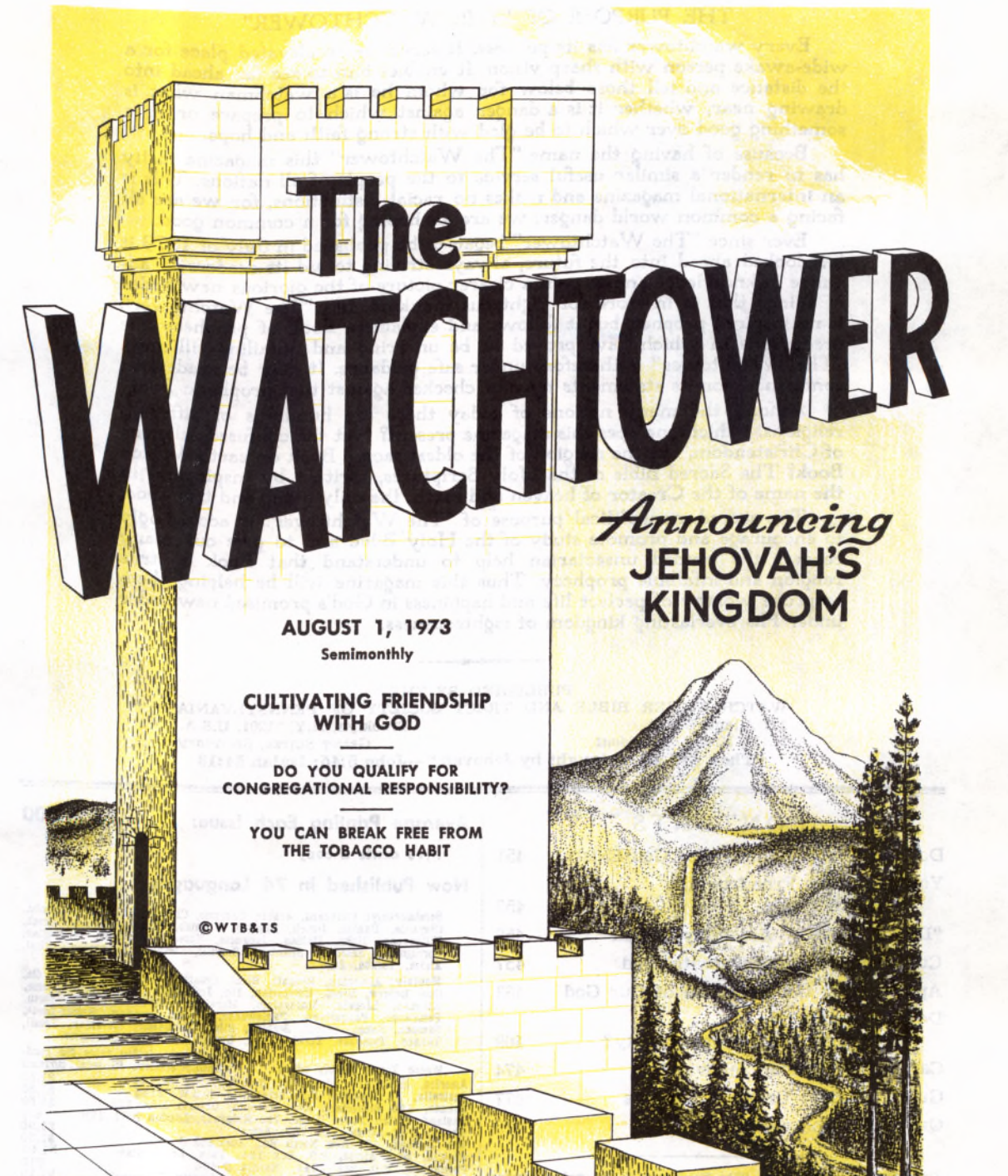




The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

AUGUST 1, 1973

Semimonthly

**CULTIVATING FRIENDSHIP
WITH GOD**

**DO YOU QUALIFY FOR
CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY?**

**YOU CAN BREAK FREE FROM
THE TOBACCO HABIT**

©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.

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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

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August 1, 1973

Number 15

Do You
**REALLY
BELIEVE**

that
**GOD
EXISTS?**

MOST of earth's population profess belief in God. Do you? If so, you may consider the question ("Do you really believe that God exists?") as directed to others. Perhaps you call to mind Psalm 14:1: "The senseless one has said in his heart: 'There is no Jehovah,'" and apply it to atheists and agnostics. But could this verse include more than such persons?

It definitely does. The Hebrew word for "senseless one" indicates *moral*, not intellectual, deficiency. This psalm, therefore, is not talking primarily about those who openly say, "There is no God," but, rather, about those who deny God 'in their heart.' That is, they do not submit to his rule over their lives. They imply that he lacks power or concern.

They are much like persons who refuse to acknowledge the authority of a court. The court *exists*. But they ignore its *jurisdiction* over them. Therefore, to say "I believe that God exists" has real meaning

only if one accepts God's Word, his authority in one's life. Do you?

Is God so real to you, for example, that his law affects your morals—even when you are not being watched by other humans? Many people will engage in stealing or sexual immorality if given the opportunity.

To confirm this, researchers recently left a car in a middle-class New York city neighborhood and made it appear abandoned. What happened? *Time* magazine reports:

"Within ten minutes, their vehicle received its first visitors. The researchers' log reads, in chilling ellipsis: 'Family of three drive by, stop. All leave car. Well-dressed mother with Saks Fifth Avenue [department store] shopping bag stands by car on sidewalk keeping watch. Boy, about eight years old, stays by father throughout, observing and helping. Father, dressed in neat sport shirt, slacks and windbreaker, inspects car, opens trunk, rummages through; opens own car trunk full of tools, removes hacksaw, cuts for one minute. Lifts battery out and puts it in his trunk. Lifts entire radiator out, places it on back floor of his car. Family drives off.' . . . The whole operation took only seven minutes."—February 28, 1969, page 65.

Do such persons *really* believe that God exists? True, they may live in a nation that claims to be Christian. But do they really believe that God stands behind his Word,

which says: "You must not steal"? Obviously not.—Rom. 13:9.

But true Christians are different. Even when out of others' sight, belief that God is real restrains them from wrongdoing. They have a healthy fear of God. And there is the assurance that God is 'always watching.' (Heb. 4:13) But, most importantly, their love of God as a Person, and an appreciation of all that he has done, prompts a desire to please him. A Christian knows that "this is what the *love* of God means, that we observe his commandments."—1 John 5:3; 4:19.

A genuine belief in God also aids one to maintain Christian neutrality. At school or one's place of employment, away from other Christians, one might feel pressured to take part in a ceremony that would identify one as "part of the world." Yet Jesus said that his disciples would be "no part of the world." (John 17:16) In such situations the Christian has a fine example in Moses.

Moses appeared repeatedly before Pharaoh and asked for God's people to be released from Egypt. Pharaoh was a haughty man who claimed to be a god. Surrounding him was an impressive court of advisers, guards, slaves and priests. Was Moses frightened into neglecting his commission? The Bible says he was "*not* fearing the anger of the king." Why not?

Because Moses "continued steadfast as *seeing the One who is invisible*." The way Jehovah had dealt with Moses and other godly people gave "evident demonstration" of God's reality. Thus, in faith, Moses focused wholehearted attention on Jehovah. Moses had no fear of even the world's mightiest man! Is God that real to you?—Heb. 11:1, 27; Neh. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:17.

Further, if a person's belief in God's existence is genuine, his attitude toward life will be favorably affected. How is this?

He accepts what God says in his Word

about why conditions in the present wicked system of things are as they are. If social inequality, sickness or poverty enters his life he does not disavow God. If death strikes a dear one, he is not completely overcome with grief. He knows *why* these things appear.

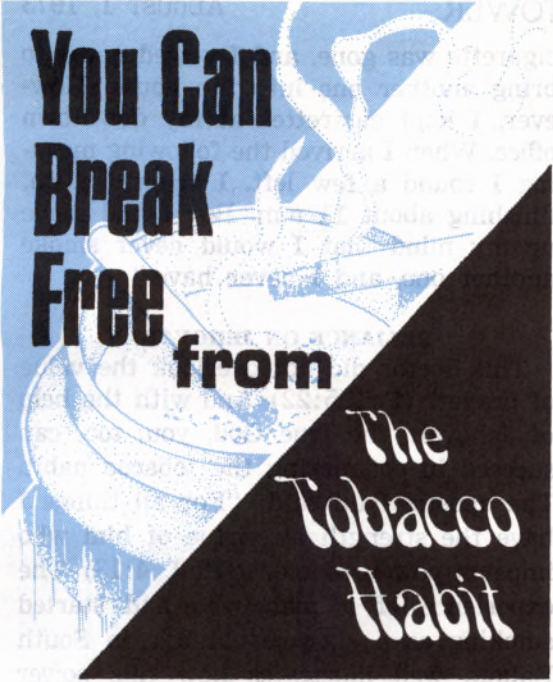
He believes what God says about the nearness of 'a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness will dwell.' So the Christian finds reason for joy, bearing up under his personal trials. This even has a "good effect on the countenance."—Prov. 15:13; 1 Thess. 4:13; 2 Pet. 3:13.

What a contrast such a person is from those who lack godly hope! To illustrate this difference, consider what V. M. Martin says about the effects of the philosophy of "Existentialism" on its adherents:

"There is little if any attempt made by these existentialists to argue against the traditional proofs for the existence of God; atheism is simply taken for granted. . . . Such atheism could explain the morbid gloom, the heightening anxiety, and the sheer absurdity of life that one often finds in existentialism. . . . The absence of God makes death an absolute, an absolute that is regarded by some as an absurd stupidity, by others as a ludicrous monstrosity. . . . [There is] an extreme emphasis on the dark side of human existence. Frustration, annoyance, and sorrows are part of all human living, but existentialism seems centered on them. There is very little joy and gladness in existentialist literature."

Does your outlook on life, your disposition, indicate that you really believe that God exists?

The time is near when Jehovah will forcibly impress his reality on all men in what the Bible calls the "great tribulation." (Matt. 24:21) How will the "great tribulation" affect you? That depends on what you do now. Jehovah's witnesses invite you to study the Bible with them free of charge. Learn the hope they have. Come to a better appreciation of what it *really* means to say 'I believe that God exists.'



You Can Break Free from The Tobacco Habit

WHY do millions of persons smoke when the overwhelming evidence is that it is damaging to health? Why do so many express a desire to quit, yet keep right on smoking? As noted in a recent issue of *Science World*, it is because smoking is "addictive." And yet, despite the increase in the number of smokers, there is a people who are remarkably free of the tobacco habit.

These people are Jehovah's witnesses. A report in the Evansville, Indiana, *Courier* noted regarding an assembly of theirs in that city: "It may have been the first time in the history of the stadium when 6,000 or 7,000 people occupied its seating space and a fog of smoke did not obscure the speaker."

Why is the absence of smoking commonly observed among Jehovah's witnesses? Is it because those who become Jehovah's witnesses never were addicted to cigarettes?

Not at all. Those who become Jehovah's witnesses are from the general population,

regarding which the *Guardian Weekly* observed: "Two out of every three men are smokers, though only one in four women." So it is reasonable to assume that about the same percentage of Jehovah's witnesses once smoked.

Was it easy for these tens of thousands of Witnesses to quit smoking? How were they able to do it? If you are a person who wants to break free from the habit, their experiences can help you.

SMOKERS AFFECTED DIFFERENTLY

Not every smoker has an extremely difficult time when quitting. Some persons smoke comparatively little, and do so principally to be sociable. Thus 10.2 million Americans quit smoking in a recent four-year period, according to one study. The majority of these were perhaps persons who did not find it particularly hard to quit.

Typical of such smokers is the Harvard graduate who, after smoking moderately for several years, finally determined to give up this unclean habit. He simply threw away his cigarettes and never smoked again. It was relatively easy for him; he felt no real discomfort, and afterward little, if any, craving for a smoke. But other cases are admittedly very different.

A former smoker from Saskatchewan, Canada, explained: "Cleansing my body of nicotine was an indescribably difficult ordeal for me. At times my chest would get very tight, just as if the muscles were tied in a knot. . . . At times, the difficulty was so severe I thought I might die." A heavy smoker from West Virginia said that when he stopped smoking he was so sick and weakened that he had to go to bed for two days. Such experiences of discomfort and sickness when withdrawing from nicotine are not uncommon. It is good for

those who want to break the tobacco habit to realize this.

WINNING THE BATTLE

Perhaps you are a person who has struggled for many years to quit smoking, but without success, and you may feel very discouraged. Do not give up! Others, who have been just as addicted to nicotine, have overcome the habit.

A fifty-six-year-old medical doctor and surgeon recently observed: "I remember the day I quit. It was Monday, May 15, 1950, in Santa Barbara, California. The experience has given me confidence. For ever since then, when I have faced challenging problems or situations, I would think to myself, 'If I could quit smoking, I can do this too.' The victory over smoking was just that significant to me, since I had failed so often.

"After each decision to quit, I would end up looking around the house for cigarette butts. Or I would get dressed at night and go out and buy some. Afterward I would be upset with myself for having failed again.

"About that time I began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. I could soon see that what I was learning did not match up with the tobacco habit. Yet I kept on smoking. During meetings I would sneak over to a drug store to have a cigarette. 'How silly,' I thought, 'for a grown man to sneak around like a little kid, smoking on the sly.' I simply couldn't continue to live that way, as a hypocrite. Since I was convinced Jehovah's witnesses had the truth of God's Word, I realized that I had to make a choice—either give up tobacco or the truth.

"I remember that Sunday in 1950—as usual I smoked during the intermission of the meeting. But that evening my last

cigarette was gone, and I vowed never to bring another one into the house. However, I kept cigarettes at my downtown office. When I arrived the following morning I found a few left. I smoked them, finishing about 11 a.m. But I had made up my mind that I would never smoke another one, and I never have."

RELiance ON JEHOVAH

This doctor did not overlook the value of prayer. (Ps. 55:22) And with the help of Jehovah, the true God, you, too, can succeed in conquering the tobacco habit. The apostle Paul said: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me." (Phil. 4:13) The experience of a man who had started smoking as a six-year-old boy in South Dakota well illustrates how this power from Jehovah God is sufficient to help one to overcome the tobacco habit. He recently explained:

"I would smoke two packs a day, and consume a box of fifty cigars a week. My hands, teeth, breath—my whole self—was contaminated with nicotine. I couldn't go through a meal without stopping to have a cigarette. The last thing I would do before going to sleep was to smoke; I would wake up during the night to have a cigarette; and the first thing I would do in the morning was to smoke.

"My mother was worried about me. So when I was about twenty-one she bet \$1,000 that I could not stop smoking for two days. I told her that I did not want to stop, and that I had no intention of giving up something that brought me so much pleasure.

"Later I started attending the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses, and decided that to please God and his people I should give up smoking. But I couldn't. I kept break-

ing my resolve. I remember asking a Witness about it. He inquired: 'Have you prayed for help?' I told him that I certainly had.

"He asked: 'When do you pray?' I said in the evening before going to bed, in the morning when getting up, and after I weaken and take a smoke, I tell Jehovah that I am sorry for what I have done.

"He said: 'Isn't the time that you really need God's help the moment that you are reaching for a smoke? That is the time you should pray to Jehovah to strengthen you.'

"From that time forward that is exactly what I did, and Jehovah did strengthen me. I was able to quit smoking, even though the craving remained with me for years."

A smoker, like a heroin addict, develops in his system a 'need' for nicotine. After a short period of time without a smoke, he becomes uncomfortable, sometimes even breaking out in sudden, cold sweats if deprived of one too long. Thus, because of the relief it brings, smoking is enjoyable to a smoker, and it can be a tremendous battle to give it up. Illustrating this is the case of a young woman, reared in Denmark and now living in New York city. She began smoking at the age of fourteen, and finally quit on November 28, 1970. She had been trying for months, but each time would relapse. She says:

"I would pray about the matter, but was not entirely honest. I would tell Jehovah that I didn't like smoking and so wanted to quit. But the fact is, I enjoyed it. So eventually I acknowledged in prayer to Jehovah that I really did enjoy smoking, but that I wanted to give it up to please Him. Then, by keeping my mind continually on pleasing God, I finally broke free from the habit."

IT CAN BE DONE!

If you fear that you may not be able to quit smoking, know that you are not alone. A Brooklyn, New York, housewife, who smoked three or four packs every day, felt just that way. She had continued smoking even though she was baptized by Jehovah's witnesses in 1968. She explains:

"One day my husband said to me: 'Why don't you stop smoking?' I snapped back, 'How can you ask me to do that? You're asking me to give up my life.' When I realized what I had said I was shocked and ashamed. And I knew that I could not hypocritically continue claiming to be a Witness and keep on smoking. So the next day I told my husband that I was going to quit—but one month hence, on the last Saturday in February 1971.

"That Saturday I smoked all day and night. The next week was a nightmare. My hands shook. I cried almost constantly. I was sick; the craving was agonizing. But I had made up my mind, and with Jehovah's help I stuck to it. I am now convinced that persons who do not succeed, just do not *really* desire to give it up. They still love smoking more than they love Jehovah."

Surely if you truly love Jehovah God you can conquer the tobacco habit. Interestingly, a resident of Synanon, a California community founded for treatment of drug addicts and alcoholics, where smoking was banned in 1970, observed: "If we dregs of society can give up smoking, then out there in a so-called sane world which is killing itself with the most dangerous of all drugs [tobacco], responsible people can make a stand."

Show that you really love Jehovah and his righteous principles. Break free from enslavement to smoking now! You *can* do it.

"Divine Victory" Assembly Begins

DETROIT, Michigan's Tiger Stadium was the scene of the opening of the "Divine Victory" International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, June 20-24. The early attendance estimate of 45,000 was topped by the second day of the assembly; Sunday afternoon 52,349 persons heard the public lecture.

The Detroit gathering is the first of over 60 assemblies scheduled. These will run through August in the continental United States, Canada, Europe and Asia; South Pacific, African, Middle and South American assemblies take up thereafter and continue into January of next year. However, the Detroit assembly itself was international. Delegates came from thirty-one nations. Forty-three missionaries were in attendance representing seventeen lands. Conventioners from forty-nine states were also on hand.

All five assembly days were packed with spiritual information, in the form of Bible lectures and various symposiums. Conventioners were thrilled with the announcement and description of a 'special work'; some described it as soon to make "world news." A major television studio filmed for later showing a seven-minute portion of one of the four dramas presented.

Watchtower Society President N. H. Knorr delivered the public lecture "Divine Victory—Its Meaning for Distressed Humanity." Concerning the impending destruction of all wickedness by God, Brother Knorr asked: "On whose side of the battlefield of Har-Magedon is each one of us?" He referred to the "great crowd" of earthly survivors of the "tribulation" who will cry out: "Victory to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."—Rev. 7:9-15, "New English Bible."

A total of 982 persons were baptized at the assembly, thereby setting themselves on the side of those proclaiming "divine

victory." Among them were persons of all ages and backgrounds. Some had been marijuana and tobacco users, alcoholics and immoral persons. All proved themselves victorious over such problems in order to be baptized. Their lives now harmonize with high Biblical standards.

Those same high principles favorably impressed the city of Detroit. The local "News" referred to the assembly as "one of the largest, best organized, cleanest, and quietest conventions in Detroit." Numerous officials and businessmen voiced sincere praise for the Witnesses. The vice-president of a motel chain said: "Yours was one of the finest groups of people we have ever had stay here." Observed an official at Wayne State University, where the baptism was held: "I have been around this university for 18 years and many years previously I was with Madison Square Garden in New York City, but I have never seen a more orderly, quiet group of people."

The "Divine Victory" assembly starting in Detroit gives evidence that God's people are living up to their commission to preach internationally the "good news" about God's coming victory. Even now their message is having lasting favorable effects on people's lives, "bearing fruit and increasing in all the world."—Matt. 24:14; Col. 1:6, 23.



CULTIVATING FRIENDSHIP

WITH GOD

"There will be those who will see the glory of Jehovah, the splendor of our God. . . . He himself will come and save you people."—Isa. 35:2, 4.

FRRIENDSHIP with God, or friendship with the world—which do you choose? If you love life, you will choose friendship with God, because he is the Source of life, but the wicked system of this world is at enmity with God, and is soon to pass away. (Jas. 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17) Friendship with God is something to cultivate zealously, even as Abraham cultivated it. "His faith worked along with his works and by his works his faith was perfected, and the scripture was fulfilled which says: 'Abraham put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness,' and he came to be called 'Jehovah's friend.'" (Jas. 2:22, 23) You, too, can become Jehovah's friend.

² What will friendship with God mean to those who choose it? For man upon this earth, it will include the enjoyment of paradise restored and spread earth wide. Even the desert plain is to "be joyful and blossom as the saffron." (Isa. 35:1; Rev. 21:3, 4) The entire wealth of that paradise earth will be God's gift to man, to be enjoyed without fear of the divisions, hatreds, wars and commercial greed that afflict groaning mankind today. (Ps. 115:16; Mic. 4:1-5) Does this mean, then, a materialistic society for mankind? Not at all! For the most glorious feature of the restored paradise is its spirituality. The

grand restoration prophecies of the Bible, including those at Isaiah chapters 2, 9, 35, 65 and 66, have their finest fulfillment in a spiritual sense. Indeed, it is because the remnant of the "little flock" of true Christians on earth today have been restored to their spiritual "land" of friendship with God that the way has been opened for "other sheep," also, to be brought into this spiritual paradise, and later an earth-wide paradise.—Isa. 66:8-14; John 10:16.

³ Unlike the animals, some of which lived out their life-spans in the original earthly paradise, man was made to live also in a spiritual paradise, to have close relationship with the great Spirit, Jehovah God. God, therefore, gave man an appreciation of moral values. It is stated at Genesis 1:27: "God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them." This could be no fleshly material image, for God is spirit. But God implanted in the original human pair the same praiseworthy attributes that he himself exhibits in marvelous balance. (1 John 4:11, 12; Phil. 4:8) As a spiritually minded,

3. In what way is man superior to the animals?

1. Why should we cultivate friendship with God?
2. (a) What will God's friendship mean for man on earth? (b) What will be the most glorious feature of the restored paradise?

moral creature, perfect man was equipped to subdue the earth into a global paradise reflecting in every way the glories of Jehovah's spiritual realm.—Isa. 11:6-9.

⁴ But alas! there came rebellion. Man lost friendship with God. Gone was his spiritual paradise, and, rightly, Jehovah drove him out of the Edenic paradise. But the glory of Jehovah's wisdom now came to be displayed in a wonderful way. Though his righteous eyes could not look with approval on the defects and crookedness of disobedient mankind, yet he made provision so that those who exercise faith in him may return to the intimacy of his friendship. How? Through the loving gift of his Son.—Gen. 3:17-19, 23; Hab. 1:12, 13; Deut. 32:3, 4.

⁵ It was a noble sacrifice on the part of the Father in sending this beloved Son to earth—to be reviled, spit upon, tortured and murdered under a charge of blasphemy against the very God whom he so loyally obeyed. On the part of the Son, it was a hard sacrifice to suffer these indignities, to be rejected and cast out by the very ones for whom he came to provide salvation, surrendering even his soul in death. Surely, "no one has love greater than this." (John 15:13) Indeed, the loyal love of both Father and Son provides a magnificent example for us. The more we come to appreciate the outstanding quality of this love, the more we should want to associate in the true Christian congregation, where the quality of this love prevails as "a perfect bond of union."—Col. 3:14.

⁶ As a mature Christian living in the spiritual paradise of the first-century congregation, the apostle John deeply appreciated this quality of love. That is why his Gospel and his three letters positively glow

with appreciative love. As a most intimate associate of Jesus and a friend of God, he faithfully reports under inspiration Jesus' own statements on love, including his soul-stirring prayer on that last night with his disciples: "Righteous Father, the world has, indeed, not come to know you; but I have come to know you, and these have come to know that you sent me forth. And I have made your name known to them and will make it known, in order that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in union with them."—John 17:25, 26.

⁷ What a grand union! This love and friendship with God and Jesus is truly something to be cultivated. Yes, *cultivated*, for as long as we live in human imperfection, weeds are prone to take root in our personalities. These must be plucked out continually, so that there will be no obstacle to feeding the soil of good hearts with timely nourishment from God's Word. How better can this be done than by making active association in the congregation of God's own people the big thing in our lives? Thus, in having God as our Friend, we may truly say, "As for us, we love, because he first loved us."—1 John 4:19; 1 Pet. 4:1-3; Ps. 84:10; 149:1.

A KINGDOM RULE OF LOVE

⁸ Ever since the day of Pentecost, 33 C.E., Jesus has been exercising a Kingdom rule over his dedicated, spirit-begotten followers on earth. As stated in Colossians 1:13, 14, Jehovah "delivered us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, by means of whom we have our release by ransom, the forgiveness of our sins." This is a real kingdom that rules over true Christians. That is why Paul writes, just before the above words, of his prayer that "you may be filled with the accurate

4, 5. (a) What resulted from man's rebellion? (b) What loving provision did Jehovah then make, involving what sacrifice?

6. What did the apostle John report regarding love?

7. Why is love to be cultivated, and how?

8. What kingdom has always ruled over true Christians?

knowledge of [God's] will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him as you go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God." (Vss. 9, 10) Far from being a materialistic kingdom, this kingdom sets the highest importance on spiritual values. "For the kingdom of God does not mean eating and drinking, but means righteousness and peace and joy with holy spirit."—Rom. 14:17.

⁹ However, God's Kingdom rule is to embrace much more than the Christian congregation! In the year 1914, in striking fulfillment of Bible prophecy, and amid the warfare of the worldly nations, "the kingdom of the world" rightfully became Christ's. The time draws close for him "to bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Rev. 11:15-18) But first Jesus, as the reigning king, gathers his true followers, anointed Christians, and restores among them the spiritual paradise such as existed among first-century Christians. All the evidence indicates that this gathering has been proceeding from 1919 onward. Moreover, the friendship of Jehovah and his Son has expanded, particularly from the year 1935, to include "a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues," and these also come to attribute salvation to God and to the Lamb, Christ Jesus. These, too, enjoy the privileges of the spiritual paradise, with the prospect of passing soon through "the great tribulation" and sharing in the restoration of the earth-wide paradise.—Rev. 7:9, 10, 13-17; Isa. 26:20, 21; 65:17-25.

¹⁰ The coming *earthly* paradise will always reflect the glory of the spiritual. As appreciation of these spiritual matters

deepens, many have seen the need to make changes in their lives. This has meant repenting of a former fruitless way of life, turning around, dedicating themselves to God through Christ and submitting to water baptism. (Acts 17:29-31) By making their lives over now, they prepare to live in the paradise earth. In the past three years alone, 477,124 persons world wide have thus come to associate with Jehovah's witnesses and be baptized in water. And still they come! Truly, "many peoples" are delighting themselves to be brought under Christ's Kingdom rule, saying, "Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths."—Isa. 2:3; Zech. 8:23.

GROWING IN FAITH

¹¹ What a joy it is to see these hundreds of thousands of newly baptized Christians, along with countless others, growing up in the faith! As Paul said concerning the newly organized congregation at Thessalonica, so we say today of these many new believers: "We are obligated to give God thanks always for you, brothers, as it is fitting, because your faith is growing exceedingly and the love of each and all of you is increasing one toward the other." (2 Thess. 1:3) Even in its infancy, that congregation was able to weather many hard trials. And why? Because of the intense love all had toward one another, and also because of their 'growing exceedingly in faith' through regular study and association together. Thus, they were "counted worthy of the kingdom of God."—Vss. 4, 5.

¹² Do you want to be "counted worthy" today of a place in the realm of God's kingdom? Then watch, as those Thessalo-

9. When and how is the Kingdom rule extended?

10. How, in recent years, have many made changes in their lives?

11, 12. How may newly baptized ones continue to grow in faith?

nians did, that your faith keeps "growing exceedingly." After baptism your desire to follow Bible teachings should become even stronger. As you continually study God's Word, it should become more and more a part of you, so that you act on it. Jesus said: "You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you." (John 15:14) And that means being Jehovah's friends too. It means discarding worldly ways and habits that are at enmity with God, loving righteousness and hating wickedness just as Jesus does, and cultivating always the new Christian personality.—Ps. 45:7; Eph. 4:23, 24.

¹³ Like Jesus, we must become intensely loyal in upholding Jehovah's sovereignty in word and in deed, treasuring our inestimable privilege of being Jehovah's Christian witnesses. (John 17:4, 6, 11, 12, 26) In our field ministry, we urge others to read *The Watchtower*. We tell them they need it, and they do! So do we! It is essential to building spiritual appreciation, based on God's Word, so that we may have and maintain friendship with God and Christ. (John 8:31, 32) Paul admonished Timothy: "Ponder over these things," yes, "be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons." (1 Tim. 4:15) We need to do that too. This requires zealous association in the congregation. Through its "older men," the Christian congregation today is keenly interested in your advancement and in helping you to cultivate "the joy that belongs to your faith, so that your exultation may overflow in Christ Jesus." Regular association and study brings such reward.—Phil. 1:25, 26; Ps. 1:1-3; Heb. 2:1; John 15:7-11.

¹⁴ Yes, we should be deeply appreciative of all the fine spiritual food that "the

faithful and discreet slave" class has been providing through *The Watchtower*, now for ninety-four years. (Matt. 24:45-47) As we take in this nourishment with others at Christian meetings, we come to be deeply grateful for God's friendship toward us. We come to be "aglow with the spirit," and how wonderfully this is reflected in our service to God! Our very enthusiasm for the grand truths that Jehovah is providing through his channel impresses the hearts of honest people. They start to wonder what it is we have that they do not have. Of course, it is God's spirit that comes with appreciation of Bible truth, and our faith along with love. The "fatty things," the "sweet things," the wholesome nourishment from God's Word that we enjoy in association with others, build in us this joy and enthusiasm that have such great persuasive power in recommending the truth to others.—Rom. 12:11; Neh. 8:10; Acts 4:13.

¹⁵ But while we rejoice in this glorious hope, we must also "persevere in prayer." (Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:17) Like Solomon, we should pray for "wisdom and knowledge," that we may appreciate Jehovah's spiritual paradise to the full. (2 Chron. 1:7-12) In harmony with such prayers, let us set aside regular time for personal and family study, including preparation for congregational meetings. By appropriate planning, we can make our surroundings suitable for study. Ours can be the prayerful attitude of Psalm 19:14: "Let the sayings of my mouth and the meditation of my heart become pleasurable before you, O Jehovah my Rock and my Redeemer." By zealous participation in congregational meetings, we can show that we have made the psalmist's words our own: "Happy are . . . the ones walking

13. What is essential to building spiritual appreciation?

14. How should the study of *The Watchtower* affect us?

15. (a) For what may we appropriately pray? (b) How may we act in harmony with such prayers?

in the law of Jehovah. How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern."—Ps. 119:1, 97.

CULTIVATING SPIRITUAL LIVES

¹⁶ Our spiritual appreciation of Jehovah's goodness deepens the longer we associate in his organization. Through Jehovah's channel we receive ever clearer enlightenment on the Kingdom and its relation to the Christian congregation on earth. True, it is thrilling

to see Bible prophecies being fulfilled in world events to the point where the "ten horns" of the U.N. "beast," depicted in Revelation chapter 17, are poised ready to topple Babylonian religion at any hour. But even more thrilling in fulfillment are the related prophecies showing that Jehovah has brought the "holy place," as represented by the Christian congregation, "into its right condition" in preparation for surviving the "time of distress such as has not been made to occur since there came to be a nation until that time." (Dan. 8:14; 12:1) How we welcome Jehovah's arrangement for "older men" to shepherd the flock in love! And how eager we should be, also, to have our own hearts in right condition for surviving with the theocratic organization!—Acts 20:28; Isa. 60:17; 65:13, 14.

¹⁷ True to his promise, Jehovah comes as Friend to "save you people." His saving power is seen even now in the loving protection he extends to all who associate in the Christian congregation. Consider,

16. What prophetic fulfillments and theocratic arrangements are especially a reason for joy?

17, 18. (a) What wise counsel does Jehovah provide for his people? (b) Why are there no generation gaps in true Christian families?

for example, all the wise counsel that *The Watchtower* provides for families. Through much of 1970 and 1971, parents were supplied with articles specially designed to read with their young children. More recently fine counsel has been provided for teen-agers, presenting helpful facts that young people want to know. In an age when the world of youth is seething with confusion, is it not wonderful that our own young people receive such sound advice, with

THE NEXT ISSUE

- What Are You Doing with Your Life?
- Witchcraft Becomes Popular
—Is It Dangerous?
- How Will You React to Pressure?

eternal life in view?—1 Tim. 4:12; Prov. 3:1-4.

¹⁸ The older generation, too, right up to great-grandparents, receives splendid encouragement and help through *The Watchtower* and related publications. While the world bemoans its generation gaps, there are no such gaps in families that are solidly grounded in Bible truth. (Prov. 23:22-25) Youngsters know that they can depend on the interest and loving care of dedicated parents. The aged know that their family's love and concern will continue with them. Parents who discipline their children in righteousness are assured of the respect of their little ones, and at the same time they rejoice in the companionship of their own elders. There are no gaps in this theocratic arrangement of Jehovah.—Col. 3:15-24; Deut. 31:12.

¹⁹ Yes, it is in the association of the Christian congregation, as well as in the family circle, that one and all can cultivate spiritual lives. Thus we can have the same happiness as David, who said: "I rejoiced when they were saying to me: 'To the house of Jehovah let us go.'" (Ps. 122:1) There is joy and satisfaction, in-

19. Where are real joy and satisfaction to be found today?

deed, to be found in association in Jehovah's earth-wide family. From this association, along with prayerful reliance on Jehovah, come peace of mind and heart in a troubled world. (Ps. 84:4; Phil. 4:6, 7) By watching every contact of association now, we maintain our position in today's spiritual paradise, with prospect of eternal friendship with God in the expanded paradise to come.

HELPING OTHERS TO FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

²⁰ Isaiah's prophecy (35:3, 4) shows that God's servants have a work to do: "Strengthen the weak hands, you people, and make the knees that are wobbling firm. Say to those who are anxious at heart: 'Be strong. Do not be afraid. Look! Your own God will come with vengeance itself, God even with a repayment. He himself will come and save you people.'" Within the congregation of God itself, faithful overseers, "adequately qualified to teach others," make personal visits on families and on the physically and spiritually infirm, as well as others, and they instruct with love and patience in the congregational meetings. (2 Tim. 2:2) Moreover, newly interested persons, who groan because of the detestable things they see in Christendom and throughout the world empire of false religion, must be built up with knowledge of God's coming vengeance against the wicked and of the hope of salvation. (Ezek. 9:4-6; 34:15, 16) To this end, a great teaching work proceeds throughout the earth today, reaching, on an average, into 1,269,277 homes each week with Bible studies during 1972.

²¹ Do you personally benefit by this great Bible educational campaign? If not,

20. What important work is there to do (a) within the congregation? (b) outside the congregation?

21. What Scriptural invitation is extended to those who thirst for truth?

a warm invitation is extended to you to associate in the meetings at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in your locality—"Hey there, all you thirsty ones! Come to the water. And the ones that have no money! Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk even without money and without price. . . . Listen intently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul find its exquisite delight in fatness itself. Incline your ear and come to me. Listen, and your soul will keep alive."—Isa. 55:1-3; Rev. 22:17.

²² Jesus himself did a productive work of preaching while on earth. But he said that the one exercising faith in him would do even greater works. (John 14:12) Today the grandest worldwide witness work of all time is being carried to its completion by those having faith like that of Abraham, the friend of God. Jesus also says to these: "I have called you friends, because all the things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you, and I appointed you to go on and keep bearing fruit and that your fruit should remain; in order that no matter what you ask the Father in my name he might give it to you. These things I command you, that you love one another." (John 15:15-17) By this Christlike love for one another and the bearing of much fruit, they are identified as Jesus' modern-day disciples.—John 13:34, 35; 15:1-5.

²³ What fruitful expression concerning God's kingdom is being made in the spiritual paradise enjoyed by God's people on earth today! Truly, the splendor of Jehovah shines forth through his devoted people, who seek him through Christ, and who find him as their loving *Friend*.—Matt. 7:7, 11; Ps. 103:17, 18.

22. What will identify us as friends of God and of Jesus?

23. How does the splendor of our God shine forth?

APPRECIATING

The Salvation of Our God

DOES God owe us something? Many people act as though he does. They view life as something to be used merely for gain and selfish pleasure. But they get no real satisfaction out of life. This is because they violate the first and second commandments as stated by Jesus Christ: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah, and you must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength.' The second is this, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.'"—Mark 12:29-31.

² Very few of mankind are interested in obeying these commands today. They are like the rich man in one of Jesus' parables who said: "Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, enjoy yourself." But that man lost his soul that same night. (Luke 12:16-21) So it is today. Those who fail to become rich toward God, but who, rather, make their own materialistic paradise in this system of things, are due to lose all during the "great tribulation" that is about to sweep in upon the earth. Their interests are material, physical—not spiritual.—Matt. 24:21, 22; Jer. 25:31-36; Jas. 5:1-5.

³ How shortsighted is this "physical man"! The things of the spirit of God are foolishness to him, so that he cannot see beyond a lifetime of seventy or eighty

years, at most. But the "spiritual man" can see into eternity. Even 'spiritual men' who have material possessions are counseled "to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share, safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life." "Fine works" are required of all of us who seek "the real life." In the mirror of God's perfect law we can see how far we measure up to the requirements for everlasting life. "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."—1 Cor. 2:14, 15; 1 Tim. 6:18, 19; Jas. 1:25.

⁴ Speaking of the salvation that comes first to the Jews, and then to the nations, Paul declares: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are!" (Rom. 11:33) Does this mean that God's wisdom is so deep that we may never understand his ways? Far from it! But we must come to God's Word with the right mental and heart attitude. We would not expect the Bible to read like a worldly novel, the purpose of which is merely to entertain. The Bible requires study, with a right motive. In Jesus' day there were some who came to him with wrong motives,

1, 2. What big mistake is made by so many of mankind, and with what result?

3. Contrast the outlook of the "physical man" with that of the "spiritual man."

4. What is necessary, if we are to search out the wisdom of God?

seeking some selfish advantage or some loophole to entrap him. (John 6:26, 27; Luke 20:20-26) However, it was only to those who sought him humbly from a pure heart that Jesus granted understanding of the deeper spiritual things of God's Word. (Matt. 13:10-15; Luke 13:23, 24) It is urgent that we, too, gain heart appreciation of Bible teachings, which are so different from worldly philosophies.

"SIN" AND "RANSOM"

⁵ For example, take the matter of "sin." We may live in a permissive or other kind of society that does not appreciate what "sin" means. But "sin" has existed ever since the rebellion in Eden. It is a missing of the mark of perfection, or falling short of the righteousness of God. (Rom. 3:23, 24) We inherited sin from our disobedient ancestor Adam, and so all of us are sinners. In ancient times, it took God's law given through Moses to identify clearly what sin is, even though death resulting from sin had been ruling as king over mankind for thousands of years. That law also clearly demonstrated that man in himself can find no release from sin. Today, also, we should be deeply aware of sin and its consequences. (Rom. 5:12-14; 7:7, 21-25)

5. (a) What is the Scriptural viewpoint of "sin"? (b) How is release from sin an undeserved kindness?



God has provided release from sin on the basis of the sacrifice of Christ

How unworthy we are in ourselves of release from sin and its effects! What undeserved kindness, then, is shown by God in providing the release from sin, on the basis of his Son's perfect sacrifice!—Eph. 2:4-8.

⁶ This leads on to the Bible teaching of the "ransom." Release from sin comes on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. Is this matter of the "ransom" so difficult that we may not gain understanding of it, even to the point of being able to explain it clearly to others? Never may that be said! In fact, the Bible doctrine of the ransom, when properly understood, is enthralling, faith-inspiring! If we were to subscribe to the teachings of Christendom's clergy, who describe Jesus as "God incarnate" and hence as a kind of half-God, half-man, or if we were absorbed in the Oriental philosophy that man's goal should be the oblivion of nirvana, we might find the ransom difficult to comprehend. But if we are pursuing "righteousness, faith, love, peace, along with those who call upon the Lord out of a clean heart," then it will not be too difficult to understand and rejoice in Jehovah's marvelous provision of the ransom.—2 Tim. 2:22.

6. (a) What is the basis for release from sin? (b) Who are the ones that will not find it difficult to understand the ransom?

⁷ As a perfect man—nothing more, nothing less—and the exact counterpart of the once-perfect Adam, Jesus could give “himself a corresponding ransom for all,” that is, for all of sinner Adam’s imperfect offspring. (1 Tim. 2:5, 6) The Greek word *anti’ly-tron*, used only at this one place in the Scriptures, is defined thus: “a ransom, price of redemption, or rather a corresponding ransom. ‘It properly signifies a price by which captives are redeemed from the enemy; and that kind of exchange in which the life of one is redeemed by the life of another.’” So Aristotle uses the verb *antilytróo* for *redeeming life by life*.^{*} Yes, even proud Aristotle understood the idea of “ransom.” But had he lived four centuries later, his philosophies—embracing triune gods, evolution and the soul’s immortality—would no doubt have prevented him from appreciating the significance of Jesus’ ransom.[†]

⁸ The soul of sinful man is not immortal! It has no life right. The Bible teaching is plain: “The soul that is sinning—it itself will die.” (Ezek. 18:4, 20; Matt. 10:28) Yes, the soul of sinful man dies, but the Bible presents a marvelous hope: “For just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive. But each one in his own rank: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence.” Just as surely as Christ rose from the dead, so now, at the time of his invisible presence, the small band of his anointed followers are “made alive” with him. (1 Cor. 15:20-23) In due order, too, others of mankind who exercise

faith may expect to be set free “from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.” —Rom. 8:21.

TWO FAMILIES

⁹ This teaching of the ransom brings to our attention two families—the family of Adam and the family of Jesus Christ. Both families are described as being “many.” (Rom. 5:15) There is no special requirement for becoming one of Adam’s sinful family. All are born into it by the natural procreative process. But, concerning what Jesus did, it is written: “For even the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Mark 10:45; Matt. 20:28) How “many”? As we have already seen, he gave himself “a corresponding ransom for all.” He tasted death “for every man.” (1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 2:9) During the past six thousand years, Adam’s family has multiplied into the billions. Christ purchased them all. But to enjoy an *approved standing* with God they had to exercise faith in Jesus Christ as the one through whom God has made eternal life available to them. (John 3:16, 36) It is written of Jesus’ followers: “As many as did receive him, to them he gave authority to become God’s children, because they were exercising faith in his [Jesus’] name; and they were born, not from blood or from a fleshly will or from man’s will, but from God.”—John 1:12, 13.

¹⁰ It is likewise with those who, through the sin-atoning value of Jesus’ sacrifice, gain eternal life in Jesus’ family on earth. They, too, must exercise faith in Jesus’ blood, which is the basis for their redemption from sin and death. (Heb. 9:12, 28; Rom. 5:8-11) As a perfect man, Jesus might have married and raised his own

* Parkhurst’s *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 47.

† “In the Fourth Century B.C. Aristotle wrote: ‘All things are three, and thrice is all: and let us use this number in the worship of the gods; for, as the Pythagoreans say, everything and all things are bound by threes, for the end, the middle, and the beginning have this number in everything, and these compose the number of the Trinity.’”—Arthur Weigall, in his book *The Paganism in Our Christianity*, p. 198.

7. How may “ransom” be defined?

8. How, and in what order, are all to be “made alive”?

9. In what way do Jesus’ followers contrast with Adam’s family?

10. Why did Jesus not raise a natural family?

family, and what a talented, outstanding family that could have been! But was that what Jesus wanted? Was that Jehovah's purpose in sending Jesus to earth? Jesus was concerned with doing his Father's will, which involved issues far more important than starting a new family of his own. (John 5:30; 6:37-40) Above all, Jesus was interested in seeing Jehovah's holy name and purpose vindicated in connection with the original human family. For God had rested from his creative works in confidence that his grand purpose of filling a paradise earth with righteous descendants of Adam would be accomplished by the end of his seven-thousand-year-long 'rest day.'—Gen. 2:1-3; 1:27, 28.

¹¹ Man as a creation of God had been perfect, and there was a way by which perfection could be restored. So why should a new human family be started? What was required, rather, was the sacrifice of the perfect Jesus, so that the God-loving, obedient ones among Adam's offspring could be transferred over, adopted as it were, into Jesus' family, with him as its "Eternal Father" by virtue of the ransom. (Isa. 9:6) But first in God's purpose, a "firstfruits," a small number from Adam's family, would, on the basis of their faith in Jesus' sacrifice, be adopted as spiritual sons, to share with Jesus by a spiritual resurrection in his heavenly kingdom over the human family.—Rom. 8:23; Jas. 1:18.

¹² The ransom opens the way for incomparable blessings for mankind in general—paradise restored earth wide, the survival of many lovers of righteousness into that paradise, the resurrection of the billions of human dead and the removal of sickness, sin and death. It makes possible peace, contentment and harmony for all of Jehovah's creation. (Ps. 37:10, 11; 72:

7, 8; John 5:28, 29; Isa. 33:24) How the contemplation of these glories to come makes us glow with appreciation for the marvelous love and undeserved kindness of Jehovah as expressed through his Son! Truly this is "undeserved kindness upon undeserved kindness"! (John 1:14, 16, 17) No wonder that Jesus' disciples wrote so appreciatively of the ransom! (Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; 1 John 1:7; Jude 20, 21) Does not your own heart well up in thankfulness for God's great love in providing the ransom and all that results from it?—Rom. 8:38, 39; Isa. 65:17, 18.

SHOWING OUR GRATITUDE

¹³ To his fellow believers the apostle Paul wrote: "And this is what I continue praying, that your love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment; that you may make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not be stumbling others up to the day of Christ, and may be filled with righteous fruit, which is through Jesus Christ, to God's glory and praise." (Phil. 1:9-11) If appreciation of the ransom moves us to abound more and more in love, it should also cause us to abound in hating what is bad.

¹⁴ God provides for forgiveness of sin on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, but this does not give us a license to sin. It is true, as stated at 1 John 2:1, that if, on account of inherited imperfection, "anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one." Ah, but do we receive such help if we willfully take liberties in committing sin? Can we expect the sin-atoning value of Jesus' sacrifice to apply to us if we harden ourselves in sinful ways? First John 3:2, 6, 8 tells us: "Beloved ones, now we are children of God . . . Everyone remaining in

11. (a) How does Jesus become the "Eternal Father"? (b) Whom does God first adopt as spiritual sons?

12. (a) What does the ransom make possible for mankind? (b) How should we react to the provision of the ransom?

13, 14. (a) Appreciation of the ransom should make us abound in what? (b) What should discourage us from ever practicing sin?

union with him does not practice sin; no one that practices sin has either seen him or come to know him. He who carries on sin originates with the Devil, because the Devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest, namely, to break up the works of the Devil." This He does through his loving provision of the ransom. Surely no one that appreciates that marvelous provision by Christ would ever want to embark on a practice of sin!

¹⁵ Someone might think that 'sailing close to the wind,' or getting some fringe pleasure without plunging fully into sin, is not so bad. Or another might think, 'Just once and no more, and Jesus' sacrifice will bring me forgiveness.' But is that sound reasoning? It is a start to cultivating a taste for works of the flesh, the reverse of cultivating the fruitage of the spirit, and the Bible clearly warns "that those who practice such things will not inherit God's kingdom." (Gal. 5:19-24) It is so easy to fall into wrong practices! Resist enticement, out of a pure heart. (Matt. 5:8) When faced with temptation to do wrong, we should be moved to say: 'No. I'll have no part of it. After what God and Christ have done for us in providing the ransom, how could I ever do a thing like that that would show such lack of appreciation?' In contemplation of the ransom, may we always say from the heart: "Now we are not the sort that shrink back to destruction, but the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."—Heb. 10:39, and see also verse 29.

¹⁶ Rather than "shrink back" into sin and lack of faith, may we grow ever closer to our God. This means growing closer to our brothers, too. We should love our brothers from the heart. "Everyone who does not carry on righteousness does not

originate with God, neither does he who does not love his brother. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should have love for one another." (1 John 3:10, 11) How do we show this love for one another? By spending time with one another—before meetings, after meetings and at other opportunities. (Ps. 133:1; Rom. 12:9, 10) Yes, by taking an interest in one another, by building one another up in love, by rejoicing to share with one another the fine spiritual blessings provided by Jehovah through the Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Thess. 5:11-13.

A POSITIVE APPRECIATION

¹⁷ The ransom should motivate us to positive acts, works of faith that reflect our heartfelt thanks for all that Jehovah and Christ have done for us. Thus we may be assured of being among those mentioned at Psalm 11:7: "For Jehovah is righteous; he does love righteous acts. The upright are the ones that will behold his face." Today there are more than one and a half million of Jehovah's witnesses throughout the earth who are performing righteous acts on behalf of others of honest heart. Their ministry includes calling at others' homes, freely teaching them the Bible and showing them the way to the everlasting life that may be gained only through accurate knowledge concerning God, Christ and the ransom provision. (John 17:3; 14:6) All this ministry is performed voluntarily and without thought of material reward. Often, too, it involves keeping integrity in the face of unkind and even cruel opposition.—Matt. 10:28-39.

¹⁸ Take, for example, this five-year-old girl: Her mother taught her faithfully, so that she developed a deep love for Jehovah and his Son. But her unbelieving fa-

15. Why is it unwise to indulge in sin with the idea that Jesus' sacrifice will bring forgiveness?

16. How may we avoid 'shrinking back' into sin?

17. (a) What positive expression of our faith may be made? (b) What does this often involve?

18. How did a five-year-old show appreciation of Jehovah's provision?

ther sent her to a Buddhist kindergarten. Here her Christian beliefs were put to a severe test. She declined to adore the Buddha as she entered the school gate. In class, she refused to bow to Buddha's image. Her teacher frequently scolded her. But there was worship of the right kind that she could do, even in that kindergarten. Before her midday meal, she daily bowed her little head in silent prayer to Jehovah through Christ. The teacher was angry at this, too, and tried to stop her, but in vain! Finally, when the teacher failed to have her take part in a Buddhist festival, she asked the girl, "Is this because your mother told you not to?" The tot replied, "No, it is because it would not be pleasing to Jehovah God." Truly, a fine expression of faith that is based on the ransom!

¹⁹ Jehovah's ransom provision makes possible eternal life for people of all kinds. By his angels he is gathering those who show an earnest desire to learn and to do his will. (Rev. 14:6, 7) The following letter was received by a branch office of the Watch Tower Society: "I am sixty-eight years old and totally blind. I have lived for long years in a hospital, with no one to depend on. At last, in November 1970, I lost the will to live and resigned myself to die. Then, one morning, I paused by the Shinto shrine in the porch, and uttered this prayer: 'May it be granted to me just once, before I die, that I get to meet the true God, who is *not* the kind of god that is in this shrine.' Even while I was still praying I was startled to hear a voice at the door. To my surprise, the person said, 'I am proclaiming good news as a witness of the true God, Jehovah.' I immediately asked the person in, and eagerly listened to all that was said. From that day, I have never missed a meeting of the local Wit-

nesses. In May 1971, I myself became a house-to-house preacher, and on December 4 of the same year, I symbolized my dedication by water baptism at a circuit assembly of Jehovah's witnesses. From the 25th of that same month I entered the temporary pioneer ministry. In all the past sixty-eight years of my life, including twenty-eight years that I had the use of my eyes, never have my days been filled with such hope and joy." In tangible expression of her joy, this dear Christian sister enclosed with her letter a generous donation toward the theocratic expansion building program in her country.

²⁰ Truly Jehovah has fulfilled his promise to "come and save" his people. He has saved them from religious Babylon the Great and brought them into friendly relationship with him, yes, into a spiritual paradise. One's being in this spiritual paradise means unnumbered blessings for ransomed believers. "At that time the eyes of the [spiritually] blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the [spiritually] deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the [spiritually] lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the [spiritually] speechless one will cry out in gladness." Even in our own day the prophecy is fulfilled: "And there will certainly come to be a highway there, even a way [out of Babylon the Great]; and the Way of Holiness it will be called. The unclean one will not pass over it. And it will be for the one walking on the way, and no foolish ones will wander about on it." Entry onto this highway is free to all who exercise true wisdom by humbly learning of Jehovah's requirements and accepting his provision for life through Christ. "And the very ones redeemed by Jehovah [from bondage in Babylon the Great] will return and certainly come to

19. (a) How does Jehovah bless those who seek him out of a pure heart? (b) How did an elderly person show appreciation of such blessing?

20. How does Jehovah "come and save" his people?

Zion [God's Messianic kingdom] with a joyful cry; and rejoicing to time indefinite will be upon their head. To exultation and rejoicing they will attain, and grief and sighing must flee away."—Isa. 35:4-6, 8, 10.

²¹ Those spiritual miracles will soon be duplicated! When? Under God's coming kingdom of a thousand years through his Son Jesus Christ. Even when on earth nineteen hundred years ago, Jesus Christ

21. What hope do we have, and how should it affect us?

performed literal miracles of those kinds. As King he will do such things again, in the restored literal earthly paradise. (Luke 23:43) What a joyful hope! And prophecy now being fulfilled shows that we stand on the very threshold of this time of exultation. Surely now is the time of all times to exert ourselves vigorously, that we may indeed walk in friendship with the God of salvation—right on through the "great tribulation" and into the eternal blessings that lie beyond.—Luke 13:24.



HOW do you feel about responsibility? In the world today many men shirk it or avoid it because it brings duties and obligations. Others ambitiously seek responsibility, hoping thereby to gain prominence, power and control over others and to grant themselves special privileges.

In the Christian congregation there is no room for either of these attitudes. (Matt. 20:25-27; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3) Yet there is a need for men who are willing to take on responsibility. These must have a very different attitude toward responsibility than do so many worldly persons. They should 'reach out' for responsibility, yes, but motivated by a desire to be of service to others—primarily to God and then to their neighbor, particularly those in the congregation. They rightly seek to bring honor to God and make his name promi-

nent and respected—not their own.—1 Tim. 3:1; Gal. 6:10; Prov. 8:13.

In the early Christian congregations of the first century, men were appointed to positions of responsibility either as "elders" (Greek, *pre-sby'te-ro-i*) or as "ministerial servants" (*di-a'ko-noi*). (Titus 1:5; Phil. 1:1) Elders were to exercise oversight of the congregation in a spiritual way, serving as 'shepherds' of God's flock. (Acts 20:28) Ministerial servants assisted them, caring for "necessary business" that did not so directly involve spiritual oversight.—Acts 6:1-6.

Whether serving as an elder or a ministerial servant, these men should be like God's Son who accepted the heaviest responsibility any man has ever borne, yet who came 'not to be served, but to serve.' (Mark 10:45) Their proper attitude might be compared to a man who,

on meeting someone trying to find a certain place, says, 'Let me show you how to get there.' Or like one who, seeing another carrying heavy burdens, says, 'Let me help you with your load.' Do you have that spirit?

SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS TO BE MET

Desire to serve, however, is not all that is required. God's Word also sets out certain qualifications that must be met by those who serve as elders or ministerial servants. Consider these now, and as you do, ask yourself whether you would qualify for such congregational responsibility. And think of these qualifications in their proper setting—as recorded initially for Christians in the first century of the Common Era. This will avoid any inclination to view them from worldly standards, including those prevailing in today's business world.

Certain basic requirements apply to elders and to ministerial servants alike. Among these are that such men be:

Free from accusation. They should be "irreprehensible," that is, not subject to any genuine accusation of wrongdoing. (1 Tim. 3:2, 8, 10; Titus 1:6, 7) This, of course, does not require absolute perfection on their part. If it did, no human descended from the sinner Adam could possibly qualify. (Jas. 3:2; 1 John 1:8) But no charge of any weight should be involved. And if there were any charge, it certainly would have to conform to Scriptural standards of right and wrong, not mere worldly standards, which are so often perverted. (1 Tim. 6:14; Col. 1:22) If some past wrong of a serious nature was committed, the man must have since lived down any reproach resulting and made a good name for himself by his fine conduct. Thus the appointment will bring no reproach on the congregation in the eyes of God or of the world.

Husband of one wife. If a married man, he must have only one living wife, hence not be a polygamist as were many non-Christian men in the first century.—1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6.

Not a drunken brawler. He should not be one who overindulges in alcoholic beverages, losing control of his thinking and emotions. In fact, as shown by the requirements for ministerial servants, he would not even be 'given to a lot of wine,' hence not one with the reputation of being a "heavy drinker" (*The Jerusalem Bible*).—1 Tim. 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:3.

Not a lover of money, not greedy of dishonest gain. Since greedy persons are Scripturally classed along with fornicators, idolaters and drunkards, a materialistic person would certainly not qualify for responsibility in the congregation. (1 Cor. 5:11; 1 Tim. 6:9, 10; Heb. 13:5) Those qualifying shun all "dishonest gain." (1 Tim. 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:2) The term "dishonest" applies not just to such practices as cheating, fraud or so-called "sharp" methods typical of a corrupt world. The Greek word so rendered has the basic meaning of "disgraceful" and may also be translated "shameful" (*Revised Standard Version*), "base" (*An American Translation*), "sordid" (*New American Standard Bible*). Similarly, though the Greek word for "gain" may refer to monetary or material gain or "profits," as in commercial transactions (Jas. 4:13), it is by no means limited to that. It refers to any kind of profit, gain or advantage. (Compare Philippians 1:21; 3:4-8.) So, if any man were to use a position of responsibility in God's congregation either to favor himself over others with personal material benefits or to gain advantage over others by power, prestige or prominence, this, too, would be 'shameful gain.' He would not be acting honestly

toward the heavenly Owner of the flock who assigned him to serve unselfishly, humbly.—Compare 1 Peter 5:2, 3; Acts 20:33-35; Luke 16:14.

Presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection. Neither ministerial servants nor elders should be mere lads but should be men old enough to have children. If married, the man should earn respect as a good husband and father, one presiding according to Bible principles. (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; Titus 1:6) Does this require that he have absolute success with every family member as regards their response to godly principles?

He would work toward that goal, of course, yet—despite his fine efforts—this may not be the result. Some circumstances go beyond human ability to control. A man's wife may not be a believing Christian; she may even oppose or persecute him for his faith. (Matt. 10:36; Luke 12:52) Or, from among his children there may be one who slips and commits some immoral act, or who even proves to be a 'bad apple' among the bunch. We should note, however, that even some of God's own spirit sons proved rebellious, as did his first two human children. Yet their actions could in no way be charged to any fault or delinquency on God's part.

Therefore, if a family member of a Christian husband or father becomes involved in wrongdoing, the important question is: To what extent does the man of the house bear responsibility for this? Was he delinquent in his duties? If so, he would not have the respect of the congregation or those on the outside. On the other hand, if he had done all that reasonably could be expected, in fact, having good success with other family members, the failure of one member to respond to his fine direction would not automatically disqualify him.

Not newly converted. For either position, elder or ministerial servant, he should have been "tested as to fitness" first, demonstrating his reliability and devotion. (1 Tim. 3:6, 10) This takes time. And, as a rule, more time would be required in the case of an elder than of a ministerial servant, as the very term "elder" would imply. Individuals vary and their rate of spiritual progress varies, however. Therefore no specified time is set forth, but those recommending such a one must exercise good judgment and not be hasty in pushing a new one ahead, "for fear that he might get puffed up with pride" like the Devil. Let him first develop the "mental attitude" of Christ—one of humility.—Phil. 2:3-8.

Certain other requirements are listed specifically for ministerial servants. Yet it goes almost without saying that these should also be fulfilled for those qualifying for positions as elders. Among these requirements are that the man be:

Serious. Other translations of 1 Timothy 3:8 use such expressions as "dignified," "men of dignity," "respectable men," "men of high principle," and these are also acceptable meanings of the Greek word used by the apostle. So, while occasional humor is not out of place, none of these men would be constantly 'clownish'; nor would they be men inclined to take responsibility lightly.

Not double-tongued. Hence, straightforward and truthful, men "whose word can be trusted," not hypocritical, gossipy or devious.—1 Tim. 3:8, *New American Bible*; *Jerusalem Bible*; *An American Translation*.

With a clean conscience. Before God, his conscience should bear witness that he is not a person who makes a practice of what is underhanded, unclean or defiling, even though these practices are not publicly known. (1 Tim. 3:9; Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:2; 7:1) Unless he himself con-

scientiously adheres to and upholds right principles, he surely could not qualify to serve God's flock in a responsible way.—Matt. 23:3.

Besides these requirements, basic to both elders and ministerial servants, there are others referring particularly to the elders. Their assigned work as shepherds and teachers is reflected in these requirements that highlight the ability to give kind, helpful, but firm, guidance and direction to God's "sheep." They include being:

Moderate in habits; self-controlled. One qualifying as an elder should have his mental and physical powers under due control so that he does not go to foolish extremes, nor act in an erratic, unbalanced manner. Hence, he is able to conduct himself in a sober, clear-minded way.—1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:5; Titus 1:8.

Sound in mind. The elder should be a sensible person; his speech and actions being rational and purposeful. His balanced thinking and outlook would be built up by the healthful teachings of God's Word.—1 Tim. 3:2; Rom. 12:3; compare Mark 5:15; Acts 26:25; 2 Corinthians 5:13.

Orderly. The Greek term used here (1 Timothy 3:2) is the same word translated "well-arranged" at 1 Timothy 2:9 (*New World Translation*). So an elder should have an orderly, respectable pattern of life, being a man of 'courteous behavior,' hence 'not ill-mannered,' as other renderings of the Greek term show. (Compare 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40; the Greek words there, however, being of a different source.) While certainly no one should disregard or downgrade punctuality to the point of being inconsiderate or discourteous, it may be kept in mind that the Christian congregation in the apostle's day did not make a major issue of exact precision in time, as does the modern business world. Record keeping was also doubtless at a minimum in their day. To be an

effective shepherd of the flock an elder is not Scripturally required to be an expert clerical worker or accountant. There may well be someone among the ministerial servants who can handle whatever needs to be done in this respect. (Acts 6:1-6) Above all, an elder should not be a disorderly or unruly person, one who shows disregard for apostolic counsel.—1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6-12; Titus 1:10.

Hospitable. He should welcome strangers to the Christian meetings, showing equal interest in the lowly and humble as in those 'well-to-do.' He should also show hospitality to his brothers, to the extent his circumstances allow, and according to their needs.—Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; Jas. 2:14-16.

Qualified to teach. He should be "holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art [or, manner, way] of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict." (Titus 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:2) His qualifying does not come by worldly schooling or mental quickness or fineness of speech. (Compare 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 13; 2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:6.) Rather, it comes because of his "holding firmly to the faithful word" in the way he teaches. (Compare 2 Corinthians 10:1; 2 Timothy 4:2.) Thus, while standing fast for what is right and true, he is also able to keep himself restrained and to 'instruct with mildness those not favorably disposed.' (2 Tim. 2:23-26) He may not find reproving easy, but love causes him to do so courageously where true need exists. (Acts 20:19-21, 26, 27) What if he has little ability as a public lecturer? This does not keep him from lovingly shepherding the "sheep" as individuals or families with "healthful teaching," encouraging them in the Christian way of life. (Titus 2:1-10; compare 1 Corinthians 13:1, 2.) Even

among elders, not all will show "speech of wisdom" or "speech of knowledge" to the same degree, but this variety is to be expected and does not necessarily indicate some lack of meeting Scriptural requirements for eldership.—1 Cor. 12:4-11.

Not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent. He neither strikes persons physically nor is he abusive or cutting in his speech, browbeating others. He is "reasonable," or, as the Greek term literally means, "yielding." Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says of this term: "... not insisting on the letter of the law; it expresses that considerateness that looks 'humanely and reasonably at the facts of a case.'" (Jas. 3:17; Heb. 5:1, 2; compare 1 Peter 2:18.) So, he is not authoritarian; not inclined to make a major issue out of trifles. (Compare 1 Corinthians 9:12, 18-23.) A related Greek word means "kindness." (2 Cor. 10:1) Not being "belligerent," he avoids quarrels, hence is not "prone to wrath" or quick-tempered.—1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; 3:2; Jas. 1:19, 20.

Not self-willed. Literally, not 'pleased with himself' or "self-satisfied." As Greek lexicons indicate, he takes a humble view of himself and his abilities, not having such a high opinion of his own judgment as to feel and act superior; not "self-reliant" or "self-sufficient," as though able to handle everything himself, or better than anyone else. He is, therefore, happy to share responsibility, humbly working with others as a body, and appreciating the value of a multitude of counselors.—Titus 1:7; compare Numbers 11:27-29; Romans 12:3, 16.

A lover of goodness; righteous. Being "righteous" relates to one's conformity to God's law, his standards of what is right and just. Such a man would be fair, im-

partial, not guilty of favoritism. (Luke 1:6; John 7:24; Jas. 2:1, 4, 9) "Goodness" differs from righteousness in that it goes beyond simply what justice requires. (Matt. 20:4, 13-15; Rom. 5:7) One who loves goodness will do more for others than just what is required or expected of him, generously performing helpful and kind acts, being warm, considerate. He also sees, appreciates and commends the goodness of others.—Titus 1:8; Luke 6:35; Acts 9:36, 39; 1 Tim. 5:10.

Loyal. He is a man maintaining unbreakable devotion and integrity to God's law and to the interests of the Christian congregation, whatever the consequences.—Luke 1:74, 75; Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29; 1 Thess. 2:10.

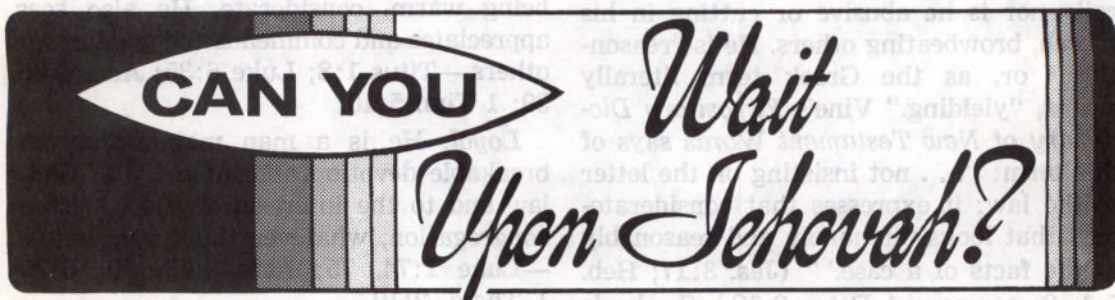
Surely such a man would have a "fine testimony from people on the outside." As with the prophet Daniel, a trustworthy man in whom opposers could find no negligence or corrupt thing, such outsiders would have to say, 'We can find no excuse for accusing him, except we find it against him as regards the law of his God.'—1 Tim. 3:7; Dan. 6:4, 5.

It is natural that those qualifying for congregational responsibility will be stronger in some of these qualifications than in others. Think of the variety among the apostles—the contrast between Thomas and Peter—yet the early governing body was begun with these men. But such men should meet all the requirements for their particular responsibility to a *reasonable degree* and with *reasonable consistency*. One slip in judgment, for example, does not mean a man is not "sound in mind," nor does one expression of anger necessarily make him "belligerent."

In reality, the requirements are by no means beyond being reached by any sincere Christian man, for, as an examination

of the Scriptures reveals, the vast majority of these qualifications are set forth as things that ALL Christians, both men and women, should strive to attain. The men holding these positions of responsibility,

then, should basically be representative of what the congregation as a whole should rightly stand for, representative of what every true Christian should be. How do you measure up?



"BUT as for me, it is for Jehovah that I shall keep on the lookout. I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me." So spoke the prophet Micah.—Mic. 7:7.

Do you have strong hope in God as he did? Can you wait upon Jehovah? When hoping for something desirable that is not immediately within reach, do you show childlike impatience or do you manifest calm trust in Jehovah? When faced with adversity, do you 'show a waiting attitude for the God of your salvation'?

Waiting is not always easy. Especially is this true when one has hoped for something a long time. As the inspired proverb says, "Expectation postponed is making the heart sick." (Prov. 13:12) Nevertheless, time moves along at a constant pace, and blessings do come to us when we do all that we can to ensure a favorable result and take into consideration Jehovah's will for us in making plans. Sometimes, too, we receive unexpected blessings, from a direction wholly unanticipated, and for these too we are thankful to Jehovah.

At times we come up against situations that are beyond our human capacity to resolve. What then? Wait upon Jehovah—yes, "Hope in Jehovah"! Not by sitting idly by, but by earnestly praying to Jehovah to direct matters and then leaving the outcome confidently in his hands.—Ps. 27:14; Prov. 20:22.

It is vital to recognize that, while Jehovah knows we need certain things, he does not always open the way for us to have all things hoped for right away. For one thing, we may not be ready for the responsibility that comes with the gift or privilege wanted. Thus the need for patience.

Sometimes, too, we may think we need a particular thing, but it may not *really* be needed; it may actually be harmful for us. In this event Jehovah does not open the way for us to have it. Of course, by persistent effort we may eventually attain a wrongful or unwise desire, but we will not find true happiness or satisfaction in this way. Rather, we bring upon ourselves unnecessary hardship and anxiety because

of not perceiving Jehovah's will for us and waiting upon him.

Are you young? Then you may be like most young folks in wanting to grow up quickly in order to have privileges and rights that are enjoyed by adults. Some young persons feel that parental control is too strict and they long for the day when they can be free from parental restraint. But Jehovah has wisely and lovingly provided that the immaturity, the inexperience, the impulsiveness of youth, be controlled by their parents until they are able to assume adult responsibility. Waiting is thus the course of wisdom; it is an accepting of Jehovah's arrangement. But not idle waiting.

While one is still in youth, there is much to learn and there are many opportunities to gain experience, skill and self-control. By paying close attention to your parents and teachers you can daily broaden your knowledge in many fields and acquire valuable training so that you can care for yourself later in life.

Are you reaching out for the office of overseer, or to become a ministerial servant in a Christian congregation? (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1) Time is needed for you to qualify. The Bible indicates that anyone so appointed should not be "a newly converted man." (1 Tim. 3:6, 10) Nor could the office of "elder" appropriately be filled with one who is still a youth. He must have earned respect because of having good judgment and ability to give sound counsel. He needs an understanding of life's problems. He must have a good background of Bible knowledge so he can reflect Jehovah's mind on matters in teaching the congregation and in administering discipline as necessary. All of this takes time. It calls for personal effort to enlarge one's capabilities. It also requires waiting upon Jehovah.

WAITING FOR RELIEF FROM OPPOSITION

Perhaps in your home there is an unbelieving mate or parent. He or she may have opposed you violently over the years when you wished to attend Christian meetings or to share in preaching the good news. You pray for relief. Do you ask for the removal of the opposer? Of course not! Rather, that he might become more reasonable, that God's love might soften his heart and thus he might become a fellow believer within the home. But very often this takes time. Meanwhile, instead of idly wishing for this relief, there are definite things that can be done.

For example, the apostle Peter tells Christian wives that they might win their unbelieving husbands without a word. How? By wifely subjection and by adorning themselves with a quiet and mild spirit. Perhaps improvement can be made in these matters. With the wife and children never giving the head of the house occasion to have legitimate complaint, this is bound to impress him, even if it takes years. —1 Pet. 3:1, 2.

One husband wrote to the Watch Tower Society: "A short time ago I sat and reviewed the past twelve years of my life. This analysis crushed me. I saw how terribly mean I had been toward my wife, while she had borne everything with humility. . . . The more cruel I was, the more love and mercy she showed." Now he is joining her in Christian worship and activity, to her great happiness and blessing. She is glad that she waited upon Jehovah.

Are you suffering from an injustice? You may be among a racial or class minority in your country that may be discriminated against in various ways. Or, you may even suffer imprisonment because of not compromising as a Christian. The natural tendency is to 'hit back.' You could become bitter and let hate fill your heart for those of another race or for those

in authority. But what is the proper course for a Christian?

If all has been done to seek relief from the authorities or by what you can peaceably do yourself, wait upon Jehovah! "Do not say: 'I will pay back evil!' Hope in Jehovah, and he will save you." (Prov. 20:22) Jesus set the finest example. When being mistreated, he did not threaten or revile his persecutors. (1 Pet. 2:21-23) Rest assured that injustices do not go unnoticed by God. At Jehovah's appointed time, "evildoers themselves will be cut off, but those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth." (Ps. 37:9) Perhaps we tend to be impatient for that time to come, but God lovingly has in mind the salvation of all sorts of men.—1 Tim. 2:4.

Has your need for patient endurance been as great as that of a young Christian in Europe who was arrested for the fourth time for not compromising his Christian neutrality, and this *after already serving thirteen years and one day* in prison? He continued to wait upon Jehovah. He has faith that "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial, but to reserve unrighteous people for the day of judgment to be cut off." (2 Pet. 2:9) He believes that very soon now God will administer righteousness and justice in the earth by the heavenly kingdom in the hands of his Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus. Do you have such faith?

STRONG HOPE WHEN FACED WITH SICKNESS

Are you plagued with poor health? Perhaps you have done all that you can do reasonably to improve your health through balanced diet, rest, exercise and medical attention. What can be done now? Wait upon Jehovah! Not for a miraculous cure, but for strength to endure, for good judgment in deciding what future treatments

will be best, for the relief that his new order will bring.

While we do not attribute all our diseases and ailments to direct intervention of the Devil, as in the case of Job, we, nevertheless, can be sure he does try at times to take advantage of Jehovah's people in their weakened physical state to cause discouragement and even abandonment of hope. We need Jehovah's help. The psalmist David prayed: "I earnestly hoped in Jehovah, and so he inclined his ear to me and heard my cry for help." (Ps. 40:1) You too can thus pray as you wait upon Jehovah. Jehovah does not abandon his servants. He gives them the strength to endure if they keep trusting in him.

But suppose the doctor informs one that death is imminent? All the more reason to hope in Jehovah! Doctors have been wrong; but if his diagnosis is right this time, what a thrilling thought it is that one will not have to wait long in the grave before standing up to life again in the resurrection under the kingdom of God's Son. Jesus said: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." Job prayed that God would conceal him in Sheol and remember him at the appointed time. (John 5:28, 29; Job 14:13-15) Yes, with such strong encouragement, we can face even death!

MARRIAGE MAY REQUIRE WAITING

Is it your desire to marry but there is difficulty in finding the right person? Or are you required to wait because of being too young or until some condition is fulfilled? While we are not to conclude that Jehovah brings certain ones together today for marriage, we can, nevertheless, wait upon him in these matters too. How is that, you say? By conforming to his wise and loving requirement that we marry "only in the Lord," that is, only a fellow

worshiper of Jehovah. (1 Cor. 7:39) If we truly love Jehovah, that will not be a burden to us. That same love of God will move us to fill our lives with the work that God has given all his servants to do. This will fill our days with activity, and our lives with purpose. As we wait on Jehovah, we will have 'plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain.'—1 Cor. 15:58.

While waiting for a suitable marriage mate we can use the time to cultivate self-control, to improve ourselves as Christians. We will become more spiritually minded, more able to shoulder responsibilities, and thus become more desirable as a mate. In time we may meet a desirable fellow believer of the opposite sex who is looking for just such qualities in a mate. Whatever the case, we have not been inactive, perhaps in a sullen, frustrated way, nor have we allowed ourselves to become upset emotionally. We have been busy in

Jehovah's service and have been making Christian advancement.

The Scriptures abound with examples of those who waited upon Jehovah and were richly blessed. Of these, Paul wrote: "In faith all these died, although they did not get the fulfillment of the promises, but they saw them afar off and welcomed them and publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land."—Heb. 11:13.

In contrast to these faithful servants of old, we are on the very threshold of the new system that they 'saw afar off.' With strong assurance, therefore, let us keep waiting upon Jehovah with endurance, for "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness." "Hope in Jehovah and keep his way, and he will exalt you to take possession of the earth. When the wicked ones are cut off, you will see it."—2 Pet. 3:9, 13; Ps. 37:34.



HAVE you ever heard such expressions as: "Don't believe a word of it!" or, "Who does she think she is?" or, "That's not so wonderful. I could have done better myself"? No doubt all of us

have, and yet how much better it would be if such things went unsaid! Or, better than that, if one did not even have such unkind thoughts!

What causes some to have unkind thoughts about others? Well, another person may be getting undue attention, or may be receiving high praise. Or it could be that another may betray an eagerness for attention and praise. So it may be that in one's reaction to the situation a tinge of envy is involved.

The Bible contains much fine admonition to safeguard us against such unloving traits. It counsels us to restrain our tongues, but it also shows the need to guard our thoughts. Even if not expressed in words, unkind thoughts, nevertheless, can do harm. They tend to deteriorate relations with others. They may

also do harm to the one that thinks them. This is because that which affects the mind also affects the body.

Among the unkind thoughts that we ought to guard against are those that show undue suspicion. Why? Well, consider an example. The Bible tells of the unwarranted suspicions of the princes of a people known as Ammonites. This people, although frequently attacking the Israelites, had never been attacked by them, for Israel had received specific instructions from Jehovah God not to do so. (Deut. 2:19) Yet when King David of Jerusalem sent messengers to convey his sympathy to them, because of the death of their king, those princes accused the messengers of being spies and greatly humiliated them. Their suspicions even caused them to bribe a neighboring nation to join them in war against Israel. In the end they paid for their unwarranted suspicions by being defeated and becoming subject to Israel. We can learn from their experience. —1 Chron. 19:1 to 20:3.

In dealing with friends, relatives, close associates and, in particular, with fellow Christians, it is better to trust others. Even if problems arise, give them the benefit of the doubt. It is better to be disappointed occasionally than to be unduly suspicious, as though everyone were ready to take advantage of you. Many husbands and wives make their lives unhappy because of being unduly suspicious of each other. How much happier their marriage would be if they made it a point to think of each other in a kindly way!

Especially as regards our view of the motives of other people should we be on guard against having unkind thoughts. Do not forget that it was the Devil himself who first charged others with selfish motives, doing so without justification. He began his wicked course by thinking unkind thoughts about God, which resulted

in his slandering the Creator. (Gen. 3:1-5) Later he called into question the motives of all God's servants. To what has this led? He does all he can to prove his suspicions true. And that, let it be noted, is another reason for not being unduly suspicious; there is always the danger of trying to prove one's suspicions true, and thus making oneself the adversary of others. —Rev. 12:10.

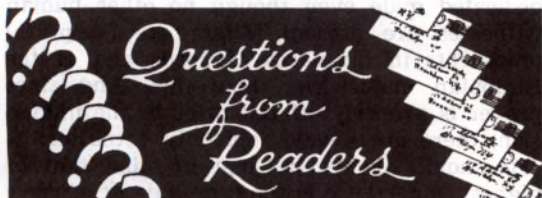
Unkind thoughts also result from being too critical, expecting too much of others. It is good to realize that what may seem small and insignificant to us may represent a great victory or achievement on the part of another. In homes where there is a "generation gap," is it not largely due to parents being too critical of their children, and children being too critical of their parents? They could well learn from the Turkish proverb: "He who seeks a friend without a fault will be without one."

Especially is there need for travelers to be on guard against unkind, unduly critical thoughts when they visit foreign lands. Strange sights and customs may well cause one to compare unfavorably what one sees with conditions in one's own land. Instead, would it not be better to exercise empathy, putting oneself in the shoes of others, as it were? Doing so, one will be able to make allowances, recognizing to what extent the people are the victims of circumstances. Rightly viewed, one can sincerely admire them for what they are able to accomplish under existing conditions.

Learn to enjoy what others do by noting their good points instead of being overly conscious of their shortcomings. Do not be like the foolish person who, noting a speaker's repetition of a certain expression, kept counting how many times the speaker used it. How much more he would have benefited from the talk if he had concentrated on the arguments presented

and appreciated the speaker's sincerity!

So, for your own sake and in the interest of good relations with other people, guard against unkind thoughts. Instead, heed the inspired counsel: "Finally, broth-



● Second Samuel 11:4, 5 says: "David sent messengers that he might take [Bath-sheba]. So she came in to him and he lay down with her, while she was sanctifying herself from her uncleanness. . . . And the woman became pregnant." Does this "uncleanness" refer to menstruation and, if so, how could Bath-sheba become pregnant at that time?—U.S.A.

The Bible does not say just what the uncleanness was from which Bath-sheba sanctified herself. It could have been associated with her monthly period or with a running discharge or with something else that brought about ceremonial uncleanness. Some translators even render this passage in such a way as to suggest that she sanctified herself from the uncleanness resulting from her intercourse with David. The German translation by Leander van Ess reads: "And she came to him, and he slept with her. And she sanctified herself from her uncleanness, and returned to her house." According to this rendering, Bath-sheba carried out the law of Leviticus 15:18: "As for a woman with whom a man may lie down with an emission of semen, they must bathe in water and be unclean until the evening."

Nevertheless, in the event that the sanctifying from uncleanness was linked with Bath-sheba's menstrual cycle, she could still have become pregnant. According to Leviticus 15:19, 29, a menstruating woman was unclean for seven days (counting from the start of her menstrual flow) and was to sanctify herself on the eighth day. Whether a woman could become pregnant on the eighth day would depend upon her cycle, which is not of the same length in all women. If Bath-sheba had a cycle of any-

ers, whatever things are . . . lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things."—Phil. 4:8.

where from twenty-one to twenty-six days in length, she could have become pregnant on the eighth day of her cycle. In the case of a twenty-one-day cycle, for example, pregnancy can result from intercourse had on the third day (counting from the start of the menstrual flow) until the tenth day.

● During the second world war, in some concentration camps in Germany where only women were imprisoned, there were cases where a dedicated sister performed a baptism. Thus, one sister relates that after she came to a knowledge of the truth in a concentration camp and dedicated herself to Jehovah she was then baptized by a sister. Would this baptism be valid?—Germany.

An examination of the Bible shows no evidence of women doing baptizing. But it does record examples of dedicated men baptizing others. (Matt. 3:13-17; John 4:2; Acts 8:38) We are not authorized by God's Word to declare that a baptism performed by a sister is acceptable; therefore, in the case mentioned, the sister should be baptized by a dedicated brother in accord with the requirements of the Bible.

However, this does not mean that the *dedication* made by the sister in the concentration camp was not a valid one. The very fact that she is still serving Jehovah years after her release from the camp shows that she understood what she was doing and had truly made a dedication. Hence, the date of her dedication can be recorded by her as originally.

If a person learns the truth when in a prison or any place where there are no dedicated males present or available to perform a baptism and the person wishes to make a dedication to Jehovah, what can be done? Romans 10:10 says: "With the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation." A believing woman can go to Jehovah in prayer and make a dedication. She can then make public declaration of her faith and can go on

record before dedicated sisters who may be present that she has 'exercised faith in her heart' and that she is awaiting the first opportunity to be baptized by a brother. Jehovah looks upon the heart (Prov. 17:3; 21:2), and surely the heart condition of such a woman would lead to salvation. In the case of Cornelius and his household, there was evidently heavenly recognition of the heart condition, for holy spirit fell upon them before baptism. Six circumcised brothers from Joppa had accompanied Peter on that occasion and could raise no objection when Peter commanded these first Gentile believers who had received holy spirit to be baptized.—Acts 10:44-48.

Similarly, a man may learn the truth and make a valid dedication when imprisoned, and even though there are dedicated brothers present, yet he is prevented from being baptized because the necessary body of water is not available. (John 3:23; Acts 8:36) He too can follow the procedure outlined above.

So there is a way open for both men and women who do not have access to baptism, either because circumstances do not allow for

it or because a dedicated male is not present. But by making a valid dedication and going on record publicly before any other dedicated ones present he or she is now recognized as dedicated. But it does not appear Scripturally proper for a sister to try to perform a baptism.

In connection with baptism, it may also be noted that a baptism may be performed by a dedicated male even though no other human witnesses are present. There are Scriptural precedents in the cases of Jesus and of the Ethiopian eunuch to show this. And since prayer is properly offered prior to the immersion, there are always heavenly witnesses.

It should always be kept in mind that of highest importance is the carrying out of one's dedication after it has been made.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

September 9: Cultivating Friendship with God.

Page 457. Songs to Be Used: 87, 35.

September 16: Appreciating the Salvation of Our God. Page 463. Songs to Be Used: 43, 61.

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