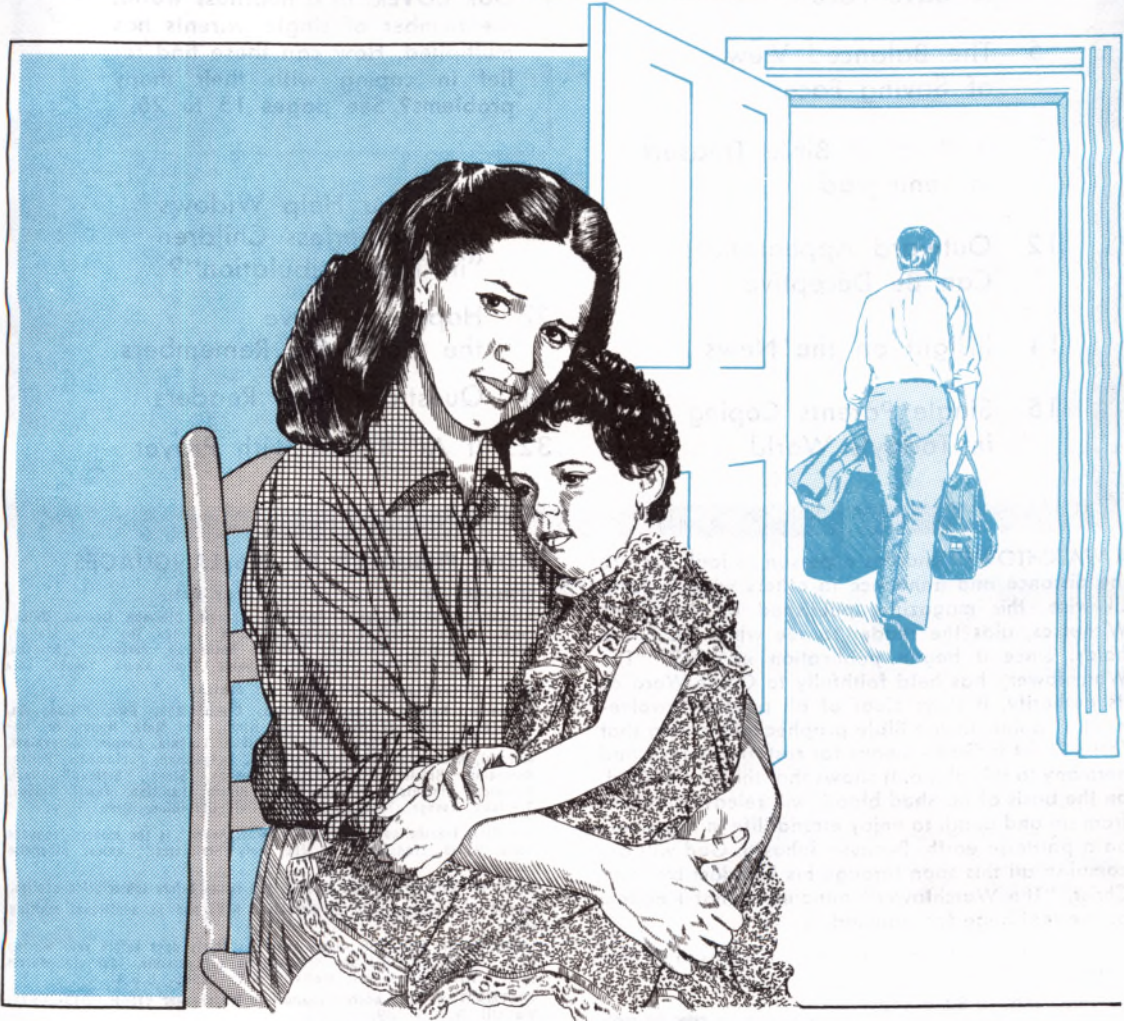


SEPTEMBER 15, 1980

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



ONE-PARENT FAMILIES COPING WITH THE PROBLEMS

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO TO SAVE FACE?

CAN you see a connection between committing hara-kiri and "keeping up with the Joneses"? Or between going deeply in debt for a lavish religious ceremony, and refusing to admit defeat in an argument? The connection is that each of these things is probably motivated by a desire to save face.

What is saving face? In the Chinese language, the word "face" has the connotation of "honor." So to save face means to "preserve one's honor, or self-respect," especially when threatened with "shame." Is this wrong? Well, maintaining self-respect is not necessarily wrong. When Jesus commanded us to 'love our neighbors as ourselves,' he implied that there would be a certain amount of concern for our own selves. (Matt. 22:39) Having self-respect helps us to keep ourselves clean, reliable and honest. Who wants to be thought of as dirty, unreliable and dishonest?

Saving face goes beyond that, however. It suggests that our reputation or honor is *the most important thing*. In Japan, for example, according to one observer, "shame has a place of authority . . . that a 'clear conscience,' 'being right with God,' and avoidance of sin have in Western ethics." To

avoid shame, or to save face, a person would be ready to make sacrifices, just as a Christian would make sacrifices to keep a clear conscience. At one time in Japan, some even committed hara-kiri, a very unpleasant form of suicide, when they were threatened with shame. Would you go as far as that to save face?

WHAT PEOPLE DO FOR "FACE"

In the East, some people still commit suicide when they feel their "face" is threatened, although usually no longer doing so by means of hara-kiri.



They make other sacrifices, too. On a Buddhist feast day, in some areas, it is common for families to spend their whole week's food allowance on one ceremonial meal so as not to lose face before their neighbors. In other places, a man may take a visitor out to the most expensive restaurant in town to entertain him. The man probably cannot afford this, and likely the visitor would rather eat in the home. But the host feels that he has to do this in order to save face.

In one land, it is the custom that when a man's daughter gets married, he provides a furnished house for the newlyweds. The father gains "face" if he furnishes it very well. Hence, some individuals go deeply in debt to do this. Usually, the bridegroom will give a dowry for his new wife. To gain "face," the young man may also go in debt to give a large dowry. However, the bride's father, who is possibly already in debt after having provided the furnished house, will likely give the dowry back. He would not want to lose face by accepting the money.

Would you go that far to save face? Many do. There are other ways, too, that a person can be affected by a desire to save face. In one Oriental country, when a person wishes to become a Christian, he is often accused of losing face for his family by "joining a Western religion." Of course, Christianity is not a "Western religion," but that is the way it is viewed there. While not wanting to cause unnecessary offense, obviously it is not wise to refrain from doing what we know is right for considerations of "face."

A WORLDWIDE TENDENCY

The tendency to want to save face is seen not only in the Orient; it is world wide. Take, for example, what is called "keeping up with the Joneses." Consider a man who owns an automobile that is perfectly suited to his needs. One day his

neighbor buys a new, expensive model. The man, who was quite satisfied with his vehicle before, now becomes dissatisfied. Why? He is ashamed of it. His neighbor's new one makes his car look old. So he buys a new automobile that he neither needs nor can afford. His motivation, being ashamed in front of his neighbors, is quite similar to that which drove certain Orientals to commit hara-kiri.

Then again, have you ever felt angry when someone offered you counsel or correction? Did you think to yourself: "That's not fair! Who is he to be criticizing me anyway? He's not so great himself!" You were justifying yourself. Why? Because your pride, or honor, had been touched.

Sometimes a person may make a big sacrifice in an effort to save face. Perhaps he commits a serious sin. He cannot bring himself to admit this to others and have the matter cleared up. When the wrongdoing comes to light anyway and mature Christians discuss it with him, he denies the whole thing. Because of shame or stubbornness, he is even willing to separate from the Christian congregation, thus endangering his relationship with his Creator and his hope of everlasting life. Would you go that far to save face?

Then, what if someone sins against you? Is it easy for you to extend forgiveness? Or do you demand "justice"? Sometimes a Christian may commit a sin against another. The offended person presents the matter to the congregational elders, and the sinner is reprovved and restored. But the one sinned against cannot forget the matter. He thinks the elders were too lenient and feels that his personal injury was not taken seriously enough. Why does he reason this way? Could it be that his sense of injured dignity is more important to him than the restoration of an erring brother? In other words, does his "face," or honor, demand that the sinner be made to suffer?

Many other examples could be mentioned. Have you ever met someone who refuses to admit that he is wrong, even when the facts are crystal clear to everyone else? Or do you know an individual who dislikes taking suggestions, who acts hurt and offended when he makes a suggestion that is not accepted by others, or who is stubborn and immovable in his opinions? Are you acquainted with some-

one who is overly proud of his prestigious job or his higher education, or, contrariwise, is ashamed because he does not have such an education? All these characteristics can be manifestations of a concern for "face," or personal honor.

Hence, a Christian does well to ask himself: "How far would I go to save face? In fact, how should I view the whole matter of saving face?"

THE BALANCED VIEW OF SAVING FACE

THE Bible indicates that the desire to save face is just about as old as mankind. In fact, the very first human sin was followed by an attempt to save face.

You may be familiar with the way Adam and Eve, our first parents, sinned against God by eating the forbidden fruit. Eventually, they had to answer for their crime. Their reactions were interesting. When Adam was forced to confess, he tried to blame Eve and even Jehovah God himself. He said: "The woman whom *you* gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree and so I ate." Eve, too, tried to evade the blame. She said: "The serpent—it deceived me and so I ate."—Gen. 3:8-13.

Have you ever been tempted to act in a similar way? When you have been faced with something you did wrong, have you tried to blame others? Some people will do *anything* rather than openly say: "I am sorry. I was wrong." However, trying to save face does not change facts. Adam and

Eve were punished for their sins in spite of their excuses.—Gen. 3:16-19.

Ananias and Sapphira were another married couple overly concerned with "face." They tried to deceive the early Christian congregation by telling an outright lie, apparently wanting to build up their reputation, their "face," among their fellow believers. God's displeasure was shown when he caused their death. (Acts 5:1-11) Would Jehovah not view matters in a similar light today if, for example, a Christian falsely claimed to be doing more than he really was in God's service? Or, would Jehovah not be displeased if, in any other way, we tried to pretend deceptively that we were different from what we really are?—Jas. 3:17.

DOES A CHRISTIAN NEED TO SAVE FACE?

Being concerned with "face" seems to bring mostly bad results. This is because it is based on a wrong premise. It assumes

that a person's reputation is of paramount importance. This is not correct. Also, saving face may be based on pride, or on an exaggerated opinion of one's own worth. This is not pleasing to Jehovah.—Prov. 16:18.

True, the Bible does say: "A name is better than good oil." (Eccl. 7:1) This is referring, however, to the reputation a person *earns*, particularly in Jehovah's eyes, over a lifetime of good works. It has nothing to do with the respect that a person *demand*s from others whether he deserves it or not.

It is also true that in order to be a Christian elder a man must have a "fine testimony from people on the outside." (1 Tim. 3:7) This "fine testimony," however, is due to his Christian conduct and well-ordered family, not because he has a college degree, a prestigious job, or spends a lot of money on his friends.

Evidently Jesus Christ did not overly value his own "face" before others. When he preached to poor people, tax collectors and sinners instead of consorting with the religious leaders, this seems to have cost him a lot of "face" in the eyes of those proud men. (John 7:45-48) But Jesus was not deflected from doing his heavenly Father's will because he was not seeking glory for himself. In fact, on one occasion he said: "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing." (John 8:49-54) He was content to wait for his Father to glorify him. Nevertheless, Jesus' actions did earn him a fine reputation before God and right-thinking men.

The same is true with us. If we try to glorify ourselves, particularly by hiding things, or by presenting a false front, this is clearly wrong and of no value in the long run. Far better is it to be concerned with the way God views us. Jesus himself said: "Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against

you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens." —Matt. 5:11, 12.

Jesus had this experience, particularly after he was arrested. The religious leaders took him for trial and tried to besmirch his reputation by means of false witnesses. Afterward he was laughed at and ridiculed. A crown of thorns was forced onto his head, and a purple robe was put on him in derision of the fact that he was a King. (Mark 14:55-65; 15:17-20) Then, while Jesus was dying, the gloating rulers stood around the torture stake mocking him. Even the way he died was viewed by the Jews as very shameful. (Luke 23:32-38; Gal. 3:13) In all of this, did Jesus try to defend his reputation or save face? No. Rather, the Scriptures tell us that he 'despised shame.' (Heb. 12:2) Far more important in his eyes was the glorifying of his Father's name. (John 17:4, 11) And for this fine course of conduct, Christ's reward was indeed great in the heavens. What an outstanding example for us today!—1 Pet. 2:21, 22.

HOW TO HANDLE THE "FACE" PROBLEM

How, then, should a Christian handle the problem of saving face? Really, there are two aspects of the matter to consider: our dealing with others, and our view of ourselves.

In dealing with others, a Christian should try to avoid putting them in situations wherein they may feel forced to try to save face. (Matt. 7:12) Hence, love and empathy will make an overseer giving counsel or correction do this in a kind, considerate way—with a "spirit of mildness." (Gal. 6:1) A Christian preaching the "good news" to a nonbeliever will do so tactfully, "with a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Pet. 3:15) In this way he will not hurt or embarrass the nonbeliever when that individual says things that are not accurate or finds that his cherished

beliefs are false. Additionally, a Christian should not damage someone else's reputation by spreading harmful gossip about him.—Prov. 16:28.

When we view ourselves, we have to recognize that it requires Christian maturity to avoid the trap of saving face. Even Job fell into it. Admittedly, he was under great pressure. His sufferings included a horrible disease, the loss of his family and discouragement from his wife.



Then three so-called friends came along and accused him of sinning secretly. That was when Job burst out in vigorous self-justification. He declared "his own soul righteous rather than God." (Job 32:2) But when Job heard the wise reasoning of Elihu and especially the reminders of Jehovah himself, his thinking was restored to proper balance. Job then gave glory to God rather than resorting to face-saving and trying to justify himself. As a result, he was richly blessed.—Job 42:1-6, 12, 13.

Hence, a Christian needs to check himself carefully. Often it is difficult to recognize that saving face is really the problem. It may be that in trying to deceive others, we have also succeeded in deceiving ourselves. The heart is treacherous and can do that to us. (Jer. 17:9) Especially is this true when we are under emotional pressure or are suddenly put on the spot. Prayerful analysis of our thinking, however, will help us to see the true situation. (Ps. 139:23, 24) And once we recognize it, we can, like Job, be helped to have our balance restored by God's Word and by our Christian brothers.

Often it is not the opinion of opposers that worries us, but that of people close to us. For the sake of the "good news," a mature Christian may endure ridicule in his community. But he may find it hard to admit a mistake or to confess a sin within the congregation and, as he thinks, run the risk of losing the respect his fellow Christians have for him. He may be highly embarrassed if his children do something wrong, and may try to hush it up.

This might even happen to a Christian overseer. Really, though,

an elder in this situation who openly confesses his problem is working for the benefit of the congregation and is setting an example for others. Right-thinking people will respect him for his honesty. On the other hand, trying to avoid blame, or covering up what he or his family has done, is cowardice. It can also lead to lying. Both are detestable to God.—Rev. 21:8.

THREE VALUABLE CHRISTIAN QUALITIES

Hence, we need to cultivate qualities that will help us to overcome the desire to save face. What are they? Well, honesty is one. (Heb. 13:18) If we value honesty, we will not *want* to put on a false front, such as saving face nearly always involves. This may be difficult. That is why we may also need humility and courage to help us to stay honest, both with ourselves and with others. (Prov. 15:33; 1 Cor. 16:13) Additionally, humility will overcome the false pride that makes us want to save face in the first place.

Yes, courage, honesty and humility will help us to avoid the trap of saving face. Paul said that some viewed him as a fool. (1 Cor. 4:10) Do you mind if people view you as a fool if you know in your heart that you are doing God's will? Or does fear of other people's opinions prevent you from doing what is right? Teen-agers particular-

ly need courage, honesty and humility to stand for right principles instead of resorting to face-saving and following the crowd.—1 Pet. 4:4.

Jesus compared those serving God to "good-for-nothing slaves." (Luke 17:10) Do you view yourself in that way? Or do you think you are quite important? Paul encouraged us 'not to think more of ourselves than it is necessary to think.' (Rom. 12:3) He also encouraged us to do "nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior" to us.—Phil. 2:3.

The Scriptures clearly indicate that there is no room in the Christian congregation for saving face, or for getting honor for ourselves. Those important Christian qualities of humility, courage and honesty are completely opposed to face-saving. It may not be easy to think this way, especially if we have grown up in a culture that values saving face above all. But, with the help of God's holy spirit, Christians are able to make changes in the way they act. Even 'the force actuating their mind' can change, if they *really* want it to. (Eph. 4:23) So be alert to the dangers of saving face. Realize that it is a trap of the fallen flesh, and, by all means, avoid it!

Assyrian Annals Shed Light on Hoshea's Reign

THE Bible reports that Hoshea formed a conspiracy against King Pekah and "began to reign in place of him in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah." (2 Ki. 15:30) The 20th year is manifestly to be understood as designating the period that had passed since Jotham had become king. The actual reign of Jotham amounted to 16 years.—2 Ki. 15:32, 33.

Although beginning his rule in the fourth year of Jotham's successor Ahaz, Hoshea seemingly was not fully recognized as king over Israel until some years later. According to 2 Kings 17:1, Hoshea became king in the 12th

year of Ahaz. The annals of Tiglath-pileser III shed light on the possible reason for this. A fragmentary inscription from the reign of this monarch reads: "All its inhabitants (and) their possessions I led to Assyria. They [the Israelites] overthrew their king Pekah . . . and I placed Hoshea . . . as king over them." (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, edited by James B. Pritchard, 1955, p. 284) So it may well be that it was with Assyrian backing that Hoshea established full control over Israel from the capital city Samaria.

A PRECIOUS BIBLE TREASURE IN LENINGRAD



IT BEGAN as an ordinary sight-seeing tour from Finland. While in Leningrad, the visitor and his wife had no great hopes of experiencing anything special in regard to the Bible, for the travel bureau's instruction booklet stated: "Bringing religious literature into the country is forbidden." Yet it was in this city that he had the greatest thrill of his life regarding the Bible as a book.

There are many church buildings in Leningrad, but only a handful of them serve the purpose for which they were built. Many of them have been turned into museums. This includes the towering St. Isaac's Cathedral that reminds one of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

The most enlightening presentation of the official attitude toward religion is to be found at the Kazan Cathedral on Leningrad's main avenue, Nevski Prospekt. This stately cathedral has been

converted into the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism. In the basement the display of religious history advances in chronological order down to the present day. A person can see the instruments of torture used during the time of the Inquisition. Especially impressive is the scene of an Inquisition court trial, with life-size wax models. The unhappy victim is chained and is on his knees before his accusers and monks dressed in black robes. The executioner stands by, ready for action.

Opposite the Kazan Cathedral, on the other side of Nevski Prospekt, is the largest bookstore in the city. On the second floor, the Finnish visitors saw many pictures and slogans that seemingly were designed to encourage the reader to reject religion. One poster depicted fish in the shape of old women with scarves on their heads. These fish were being lured by the "ticket to the Kingdom of heaven" that was attached to a hook labeled "Sects."

Continuing down Nevski Prospekt to the east and turning to the right just before the statue of Catherine the Great, the visitors found themselves in front of the famous Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library. This library is the



second largest in the Soviet Union and one of the biggest in the world, containing more than 17 million items. When the visitor inquired about *the* manuscript, a library official raised a series of polite, searching questions. Then this official disappeared, shortly to return with a reddish-brown box. He set it on the table and opened the lid. There it was—the Leningrad Codex from the year 1008 (or, 1009). But what is this manuscript, and why is it so valuable?

THE LENINGRAD CODEX

Would you be interested in seeing a manuscript of the Hebrew Scriptures that serves as a basic text for Bible translations? This is what the Leningrad Codex is all about.

But you may wonder: Were not the Hebrew Scriptures completed before Christ? How could this text be from as late as the year 1008? To understand this matter better, we need to know a little about the Masoretes.

The Masoretes (in Hebrew, *Baalei Hamasorah*, “Lords of Tradition”) lived in the centuries after Christ and were extremely accurate copyists of the Hebrew Scriptures. They made no alterations in the text but, instead, noted the changes made by earlier scribes and called attention to these in the margin of the Hebrew text. They also invented a system of vowel points and accent marks to aid the reader in arriving at the correct pronunciation. In view of the meticulous care of the Masoretes, their text is indeed suitable for translating the Bible, even though it is more than 1,000 years removed from the original text. A comparison with far earlier texts, such as the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, confirms the accuracy of the Masoretic text.

However, no individual manuscript is completely reliable, because copyists did make errors. That is why Hebrew editions

began to be made, based on a comparison of different manuscripts. In 1906, for example, the German scholar Rudolf Kittel published his famous *Biblia Hebraica*, or, Hebrew Bible. As a basis, he used Jacob ben Chayyim’s Masoretic text. Additionally, in his footnotes he compared the readings of many other manuscripts.

Ben Chayyim’s text was from as late as 1524-25 C.E. Kittel, together with his successor, German professor Paul Kahle, zealously sought to get hold of older Masoretic texts. There was an excellent Masoretic text in the synagogue of the Sephardim in Aleppo, Syria. It was compiled by the famous Ben Asher family and was prepared about the year 930 C.E. But this manuscript could not be used because, as Professor Kahle said, “the owners of the codex would not hear of a photographic copy,” for fear of its being desecrated and their being cursed.

Still, there was another Masoretic text based on the work of the Ben Asher family. It contained the entire Hebrew Scriptures, and, in fact, the decision had been made to use it as the basis for the third edition of the *Biblia Hebraica*. It had been copied in Old Cairo in 1008 (or, 1009) from the corrected clear books prepared by the master Aaron ben Moshe ben Asher, as the copyist Samuel ben Jacob himself mentions. Its owners did not ‘fear being cursed’ for having the Bible copied, as did the owners of the Aleppo Codex. They loaned their manuscript to Kittel and Kahle for two years. This manuscript is the very Codex B 19-A that is now preserved in the Leningrad Public Library.

MAY I PHOTOGRAPH IT?

The Leningrad Codex, a manuscript in book form, is now in loose sheets. Because it had been microfilmed, the binding is now undone. The sheets are approximately of quarto size, only wider, and feel like very thick paper, almost like thin cardboard.

The edges of some of the pages are worn, but the text itself, written in three columns, is sharp and clear.

"May I photograph this manuscript?" asked the visitor. The library official disappeared again into an inner room and returned with an affirmative reply. The visitor piled a few sturdy volumes from the nearby bookshelf in front of the nearest window, placed his pocket tripod with the camera on top and selected the second sheet from the manuscript pile for the photograph.

The visitor found it of interest to note that God's name, the Tetragrammaton (Jehovah, or, Yahweh) appeared several times on this sheet, starting from what is now referred to as Genesis 2:4. The divine name appears 6,960 times in the Hebrew

Scriptures. This certainly does not speak well of those Bible translators who substitute for it the word "Lord."

At the end of the tour the library official showed the visitors several rare manuscripts in glass cases. Included was the famous Ostromir Gospel, the oldest surviving dated manuscript in Russian (Old Bulgarian), from the year 1056.

It is certainly a pleasant surprise that such a precious manuscript as the *Lenin-grad Codex* is carefully preserved in a country that prohibits the free importation of Bibles. The manuscript involved is not just one of many but the very one that has furnished the basis for many modern translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, including the *New World Translation* published by the Watch Tower Society.



From Strife to Family Peace

MANUEL, his wife and their young son and daughter live in Spain. Today they are a happy family. But it was not always that way.

When they got married, Manuel and his bride did not know each other well. Soon they began to argue and fight. Manuel was a jealous person and a heavy drinker. He often came home drunk and in a fighting mood. Why, eventually things got so bad that they had a battle every three or four days! After some years, Manuel began having an affair with another woman. His wife was so desperate that she considered committing suicide or poisoning him.

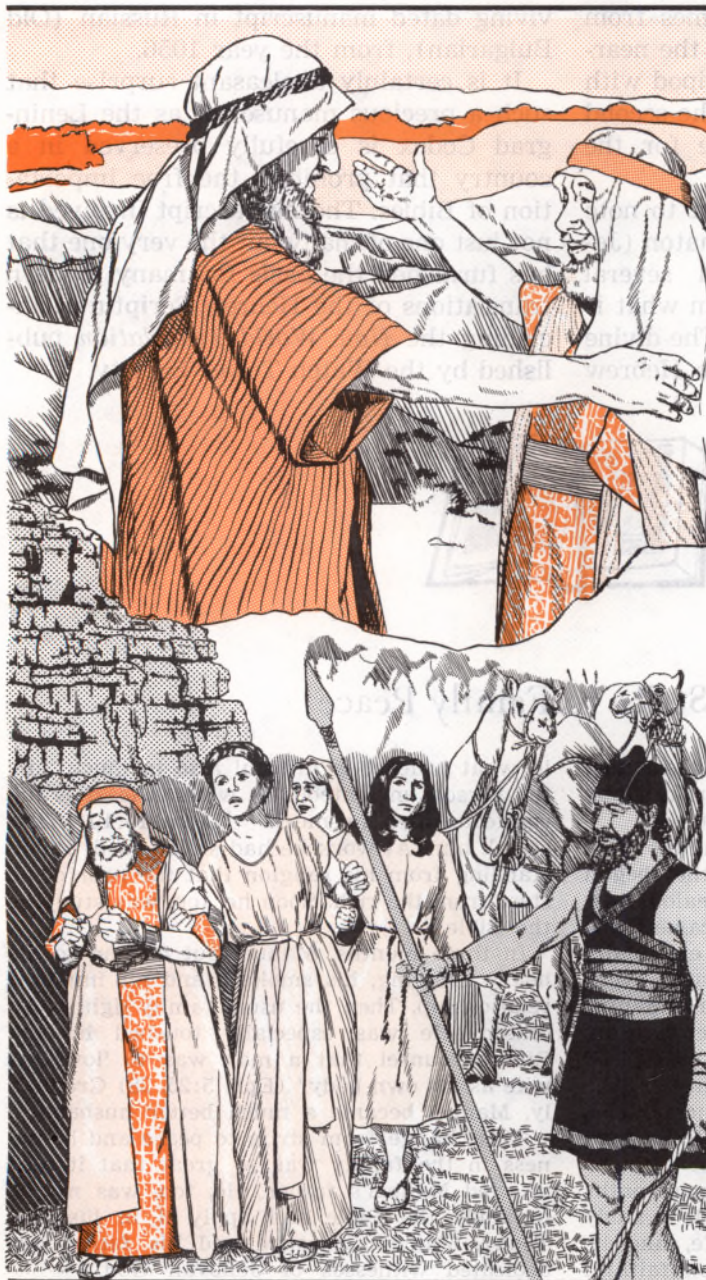
Then a new influence entered their home. Manuel's wife started studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, but he did not want to know anything about it. However, some months later he was in a nearby room while a study was being conducted with his wife, and he overheard these words: "The person faithful

in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much." (Luke 16:10) That struck him. At work he had stolen food, understanding from his religion that the poor could steal from the rich. Soon he, too, was studying the Bible.

In three months, Manuel put an end to his heavy drinking, his smoking and his immoral relationship. Then the usual family fights also ceased. He was especially touched by the Bible's counsel that a man was to 'love his wife as his own body.' (Eph. 5:25, 28) Gradually, Manuel became a much better husband.

This change from strife to peace and happiness in the family was so great that it also affected Manuel's father. He, too, was moved to study the Bible and apply it in his life. Today, Manuel, his wife and his father are dedicated witnesses of Jehovah God.

OUTWARD APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEPTIVE



Abraham and his nephew Lot had a problem. Both men had accumulated such large flocks and herds that quarrels erupted between their herdsmen. To keep peace, Abraham suggested that he and Lot separate. He gave Lot the first choice. 'If you go to the left,' Abraham said, 'I will go to the right. But if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.'

Lot looked out from their vantage point, and, pointing to the beautiful well-watered region near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, he chose it. The area appeared good. But was it *really*? The inhabitants of the area were morally degraded, and this led to trouble. —Gen. 13:5-13.

In time, Lot and his family moved right into Sodom. This put them in a dangerous situation. King Chedorlaomer and his allies defeated the king of Sodom, and, as you can see, took away captive Lot and his family. Soon afterward, however, Abraham and his forces rescued them all, recovering all losses. Lot and his family returned to Sodom to live. —Gen. 14:4-16.



Lot's wife may have found certain things about Sodom very attractive. But the appearance was truly deceptive. Actually, sexual perversion and a total disregard for moral decency were characteristic of both Sodom and Gomorrah. Finally, Jehovah God decided to destroy the cities because of their wickedness. But in his mercy God sent two angels who took Lot, his wife and his two daughters by the hand and led them out of the city. Then one of the angels said: 'Run for your lives. And don't look back.'

Lot and his daughters obeyed. They ran away from Sodom without looking back. But Lot's wife disregarded the angelic direction, looked back, perhaps longingly for the material things she had left behind in Sodom, and became a pillar of salt.—Gen. 19:1-26; 2 Pet. 2:7, 8.

There is a lesson here for us. Like Sodom, the old system of things on earth today may appear attractive. But that appearance is deceptive. Actually, that system is morally corrupt, and its destruction is just as certain to come as God's fiery judgment came on ancient Sodom.—Luke 17:28-30.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● A preoccupation with the idea of life after death and reincarnation recently resulted in the suicide of a 16-year-old boy and serious injury to his 15-year-old girl friend. Friends related how the two had "jokingly" discussed suicide plans with other youths in Washington State after read-

Suicide to Gain Afterlife

ing a book that dealt with the subject of afterlife. The youths devised a "fantasy" plan in which two of them would die by crashing a sports car into their school, thus moving on to a "higher plane of existence."

Of course, such a reaction to the idea of life after death is extreme. But it illustrates the mental bondage of millions who unquestioningly accept such teachings because they are part of their religious background, rather than because they are founded on Scriptural teaching. On the other hand, Jesus said that adherence to the Word of truth would 'set men free.' He taught his disciples the same truth that was expressed in God's Word centuries before: "The dead . . . are conscious of nothing at all." Knowing this might have spared the youths this tragedy.—John 8:32; Eccl. 9:5; compare John 11:11-14.

● Recently, the newspaper "Brazil Herald" commented on how the Atlético soccer team of Belo Horizonte noisily celebrated their victory over the Fluminense team of Rio de Janeiro. But the "Herald" noted that four of the Atlético team, "re-

Whose Side Is God On?

cently converted to Protestantism, maintained themselves separate, opening Bibles and thanking the Lord for helping them defeat the Fluminense."

Does it make sense to ask for or give thanks to God for such a victory? Whose request should be granted when sincere persons on both sides pray for victory? Observing this, the "Brazil Herald" carried the question one step further: "This revives a question often asked by people not much intoxicated by patriotism during wars: What does the Lord have against the other side—in this case, against Rio's Fluminense team, to side unilaterally with the Atlético team? Maybe these

pious people overrate somewhat the interest the Lord might take in the result of a soccer game—of perhaps even a war between nations, at that."

Certainly God cannot be held responsible for the success or failure of one side in sports events or blood-shedding wars fought by religious persons against one another. The answer to such persons who pray for God's help for their side is the same one he gave ancient apostate Israel: "And when you spread out your palms, I hide my eyes from you. Even though you make many prayers, I am not listening; with bloodshed your very hands have become filled." Rather than taking sides in men's wars, true Christians will remain neutral, praying only for God's kingdom.—Isa. 1:15, 16; 2:4; Matt. 6:9, 10.

● Pope John Paul II's recent directive that Catholic clergy world wide cease secular political activities has caused some confusion. Jesuit priest and U.S. congressman Robert Drinan has said that he will not run for office again. On the other hand, nun Carolyn Farrell, mayor of Dubuque, Iowa, said she will not quit, as women "have never been in the category of clergy."

Puzzle of Papal Politics

Meanwhile, almost simultaneously, the pope was urging African church members to participate in politics: "An important challenge for the Christian is that of the political life," he told a giant audience in Nairobi, Kenya. "In the state citizens have a right and duty to share in the political life." The pope added that "it would be a mistake to think that the individual Christian should not be involved in these areas of life."

Commenting on the seeming contradiction in principle between the pope's directive to the clergy and his own exercise of politics in Poland and in the church, a New York "Times" editorial observed: "It would seem to be not politics that the Pope wants priests to abandon, but only elective office." In view of Jesus' declaration that his disciples "are not of the world; as I also am not of the world," can we imagine him issuing such contradictory expressions?—John 17:14; 18:36, Catholic "Douay Version."

"The woman who is actually a widow and left destitute has put her hope in God and persists in supplications and prayers night and day."—1 Tim. 5:5.

SINGLE PARENTS COPING IN TODAY'S WORLD

"I AM a 28-year-old widow with two children. I am very depressed for I don't want to raise my children without a father. It seems like no one even cares about me. My children see me cry often and it affects them. I know I can't go on feeling like this, but what should I do?" This letter expresses a common plea from some who are facing many problems—single parents.

1-3. (a) What did one widow write? (b) Has there been an increase in single-parent families, and what are some of the problems these face?



² Worldwide reports show a rapid increase in single-parent families. In 10 years the number has almost doubled in the United States, and has more than doubled in Canada. They make up about one tenth of all families in Australia and Great Britain. It is estimated that two out of every five children now living in the United States will spend some of their life in a single-parent family.

³ There are many reasons for this increase. Wars and car accidents have robbed many homes of a father. As family life decays, desertion, divorce and separation have become commonplace. Some unwed mothers, rather than having an abortion or giving up their child for adoption, have chosen to rear the child instead. A single parent must cope with many problems. Loneliness, rearing children, making a living, sexual desires and managing a household are just a few.

CHRISTIANITY BRINGS RELIEF

⁴ In the first century, during the infancy of Christianity, the ravages of war, sickness and moral decay likewise produced countless

4. What conditions during the first century produced many single-parent families?

widows and fatherless children. Divorce or abandonment was often the rule. Usually children of tender years were left with the mother who now had to bring them up alone. The world of the Roman Empire was a heartless society that despised the weak. So widows were subjected to harsh abuses. Some even turned to prostitution for support.

⁵ Christianity brought a real change. It showed compassion to the less fortunate. But even beyond this, by its teachings, single parents were infused with the moral strength to break free from the vices of the time. Instead of producing shameless women, Christianity produced women who were self-controlled, chaste, who loved their families. Even non-Christians recognized the difference, as one of these exclaimed: "What women the Christians have!"

⁶ What Christian principles helped? The apostle Paul, in offering counsel about widows, said that the exemplary widow "has put her *hope in God* and *persists in supplications* and prayers night and day." He indicated that a widow not less than 60 years old could be placed on the list for assistance if, among other things, "she diligently followed *every good work*." (1 Tim. 5:5, 9, 10) Here, at least three principles stand out: (1) Trust God now and anticipate the hope of eternal life that he has promised; (2) maintain a close personal relationship with God; (3) keep involved in beneficial work. We shall see how these three principles, if applied, genuinely help not only single parents but all Christians to cope with today's pressures.

COPING WITH LONELINESS

⁷ One single parent sighed: "When I come home and see those four walls, and

especially after the children are in bed, loneliness really comes over me." Yes, loneliness is often the biggest problem a single parent faces. Though becoming closer to the children helps, many yearn for adult companionship. Keeping involved in "every good work" is one time-tested remedy. First-century Christian widows 'entertained strangers, washed the feet of the holy ones [through personal acts of service] and relieved those in tribulation.' (1 Tim. 5:10) Noting this, one 68-year-old modern-day Christian widow took to visiting other nearby widows and rest homes whenever she got lonely. She said: "I find that by making these visits, keeping up my housework and taking care of my spirituality I don't have time to be lonely."

⁸ Kingdom preaching is a "good work" commanded by Jesus, a work that can relieve loneliness and depression. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) One lonely and depressed single parent who had become withdrawn was urged by her friends to get started in the house-to-house witnessing. She did. At her first door she was invited in by a badly crippled, yet unusually cheerful, woman. How could she be so happy? "It is because I have my life, my dear. I am alive," was her jovial reply. This was a turning point for the Witness, who reasoned: "I have my health, the love of the congregation, two fine children and, above all, Jehovah. Why should I be unhappy?" Helping others spiritually can prevent our becoming self-centered and giving in to self-pity. Teaching others keeps our own hope alive and fresh; so we continue to "put [our] hope in God."—1 Tim. 5:5.

⁹ Yet one widower stated realistically: "Loneliness does not go away with just hard work. Often you have to live with it. It must simply be endured with the help and strength from Jehovah." Such strength

5. In what two ways did Christianity help?

6. What Christian principles can help single parents, as well as all Christians, to cope with today's pressures?

7. (a) Why is loneliness especially difficult for some single parents? (b) How does the principle suggested at 1 Timothy 5:10 help?

8. (a) Why does Kingdom preaching help us fight loneliness and depression? (b) Does it really work? 9. Will loneliness always go away with hard work? What also helps?

comes when one “*persists in supplications and prayers night and day.*” (1 Tim. 5:5) Prayerfully recounting our activities throughout the day, and knowing that Jehovah is always there listening and that he cares about the details of our life is truly comforting. Pouring out our heart to him “*night and day*” helps—especially at night when, as many report, the problem of loneliness can become serious.

COPING WITH SEXUAL DESIRES

¹⁰ Many single parents ache for the warm

10. (a) When can sexual desires become a serious problem? (b) How does one ‘go in for sensual gratification,’ and to what can this lead?



Single parents can train their children to help care for household duties

companionship of marriage and the intimacies of the marital bed. Certainly such feelings are not wrong in themselves. The desire to remarry is natural. The problem comes when a person decides to satisfy these “sexual impulses” *regardless of the cost*. This happened in the apostle Paul’s day. Some younger widows allowed “their sexual impulses [to] come between them and the Christ.” (1 Tim. 5:11, 12) This was serious because, in effect, such an individual was saying: ‘My sexual needs are just too great. I have to do something to give my body relief!’ These bodily or sensual desires gradually became the big

thing in life, even bigger than spiritual interests. These desires could build up to the point where one would ‘go in for sensual gratification’ and thus become “dead though she is living.” (1 Tim. 5:6) That person’s interest in spiritual matters would die. The same thing can happen to any Christian (male or female) today. One can commit ‘spiritual suicide’ by ignoring Bible standards of morality, because of being so absorbed in satisfying “sexual impulses.”

¹¹ Therefore, the Bible urges: ‘Deadens your body members as respects *sexual appetite*.’ (Col. 3:5) But how? By guarding your mind and heart. If you were trying to diet and control your appetite for food, would you read magazines containing pictures of delicious foods, or would you watch TV shows about cooking? Would you associate with people who constantly talked about food? Hardly! It is the same with “sexual appetite.” One widow frankly stated: “We are in a world that just never stops talking about sex. So I am quite

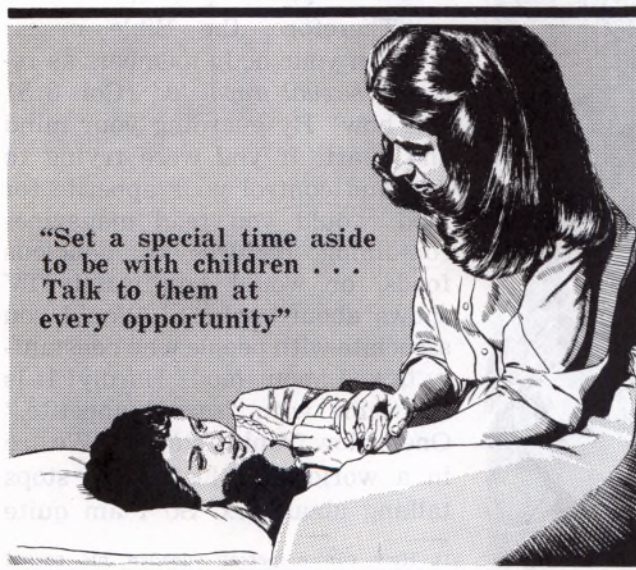
11. How can a person ‘deadens his sexual appetite’?

careful about my choices of entertainment and with whom I socialize. A *diabetic would surely not want to press his nose to the window of a candy store.*"

¹² However, to keep overcoming these desires, day after day, an individual must develop a close personal relationship with God. Besides personal study and meditation, this requires persistence in "*supplications.*" (1 Tim. 5:5) Paul not only mentions prayers in general, but says "*supplications.*" These are petitions to God conveying an intense need. They are earnest pleas, yes, a begging for help, perhaps with "*strong outcries and tears.*"—Heb. 5:7.

¹³ Are your prayers for self-control and strength as intense as that? Do you persist in them? Do you pray at the very moment these desires become strong? Are you specific, perhaps revealing to our Father things that you would not confide to another human? Also, do you work in harmony with your prayers? One Christian woman said: "Don't ask for Jehovah's

12, 13. (a) To cultivate a personal relationship with Jehovah, what is needed? (b) Why are "supplications" so important, and how can one work in harmony with these?



help to overcome sexual desires and then constantly think about sex. True, certain times during the month your sexual urges may be very great. Activate your mind by doing something else. Go visit someone. Go for a walk or do anything that will change the subject. Keep as busy as you can during this part of the month." Another who also saw the value of keeping busy in "every good work" agreed, saying: "Scrub your windows. Scrub your floor. Dig in the dirt. I've done it. It works!" When you see Jehovah helping you with this problem—no, not by performing a miracle, but at least by giving you the strength to cope with it *each day*—you will be drawn closer to him.

¹⁴ Without this precious "intimacy with Jehovah" a person could begin seeking a marriage mate *regardless of the cost*, perhaps even dating worldly persons. (Ps. 25:14) One who did this admitted: "The real problem was my not being close to Jehovah. When I had a chance to get married, it sounded so good. I forgot the moral standards I'd been taught. Then one day I realized that the man was only interested in himself and not marriage. Then I had to live with a guilty conscience."

True, being single can be hard, but as one divorced Christian woman warned: "There is one thing much worse than being single. It's being married to the wrong person!" There is always the possibility of finding a mate among devoted Christians, someone "in the Lord." (1 Cor. 7:39) Some have waited for many years for such a mate. Meanwhile, they have not become bitter or been overwhelmed by their circumstances. They wisely have used the time to develop the

14. (a) What can happen if a person fails to have a close relationship with Jehovah? (b) What can single parents do while waiting for a Christian mate?

qualities that would make them better mates. As one single parent said: "I ask myself, 'Am I the spiritual woman someone would choose?' If I'm miserable while I'm single, then I probably would make someone a miserable mate."

MANAGING A HOUSEHOLD AND REARING CHILDREN

¹⁵ Though it is a taxing job, many single parents have imitated the capable woman described in Proverbs 31. Although married, she had the general supervision of the household. She saved money by shopping carefully, making her own goods from raw materials and not wasting food, for she prepared a "prescribed portion." (Vss. 13-15, 19) She started early and worked late. (Vss. 15, 18) She made items and sold them. (Vs. 24) She used "her own hands" to care for chores. (Vss. 17, 19) Today, to learn to use their "own hands" skillfully, some single parents have read how-to-do-it books and have consulted professionals for advice. (Often, after explaining their status, they have received free expert instructions.) Others have told their needs to fellow witnesses of Jehovah who had certain "know-how," and, when available, these have kindly given assistance. All of this keeps expenses down.

¹⁶ Yet, despite all that a widow can do, with times becoming harder, she must *trust in God* for daily provisions. A good example of one who "put her hope in God" was the single parent who lived in the city of Zarephath in the days of God's prophet Elijah. By Jehovah's direction, Elijah asked for her last bit of food, promising her that God would provide. What would you have done? She had enough for one last meal. At least that one meal was something she could count on. Yet, because

of her faith, she gave up what was certain for the uncertain. God's word through the prophet came true. She and her son never lacked food. Similarly today, single parents, along with all Christians, must put confidence in God by seeking his kingdom *first* and by complying with his righteous standards. Then they will see that he will provide.—1 Ki. 17:8-16; Luke 4:25, 26; Matt. 6:31-33.

¹⁷ The difficult task of being both "mother" and "father" to the children and rearing them properly can be accomplished only if the parent never forgets what should be of highest importance in the home. Note the Bible answer:

"Better is a little in the fear of Jehovah than an abundant supply and confusion along with it. Better is a dish of vegetables where there is love than a manger-fed bull and hatred along with it." (Prov. 15:16, 17)

The true value of a meal is not what is on the table, but what is in the heart of those who eat together. Love and a whole-some fear of God are what really count.

¹⁸ To have the time to help their children to develop an awe for God and yet have needed money, some single parents, often with their children's help, have sold their own homemade goods or have performed services at home.* Others have taken advantage of any government assistance to which they have a legal and moral right. A number have lowered their living standard to get by on part-time work, like one Christian woman with four children. She said: "I wanted to be with the children as much as possible. It was bad enough their not having a father without depriving them of a mother too." Of course, not all may be able to find such convenient work. But by confiding in the children, explain-

* For suggestions, see *Awake!* of August 22, 1975, pages 9-11, and September 22, 1975, pages 9-12.

15. (a) What have some single parents done to manage a household successfully? (b) Do you have any additional suggestions?

16. Why is it vital to trust in God, and whose example illustrates this need?

17. What must single parents never forget if they are to rear their children successfully, and why?

18. (a) What have some single parents done to have money and yet have the time to care for their children? (b) What else do you feel can be done?

ing why secular work is necessary and by spending as much time as possible with them, these parents can maintain a warm atmosphere of love in the home.

¹⁹ 'Loving their children,' which includes giving needed discipline, is essential. (Titus 2:4; Prov. 13:24) It helps to prevent the children, who have already lost one parent, from feeling insecure. Because some women tend to be sentimental, it may require real effort to give discipline. But remember, discipline, which may include punishment, tells the child that you love him enough not to let him get into trouble.

²⁰ Single parents who have stayed close to their children suggest:

"Set a special time aside to be with the children and don't let anything interfere with it. The housework will always be there; the children won't. Concentrate on building the children up spiritually." "My discipline had to be tempered with understanding because of the shock of losing their mother. I talk to them at every opportunity, no matter what time of the day or night. We have 'cosy moments' when we prepare dinner. It is then that they really confide in me."

Such love comes through. Children can see and feel it. Though all of this effort in

19. (a) What does 'loving their children' mean for parents? (b) Why is this not always easy for a single parent?
20. (a) What have some done to keep close to their children? (b) What twofold blessing comes from staying close to one's children and rearing them properly?

HOW TO COPE

- ☐ Trust God now and anticipate the hope of eternal life that he has promised
- ☐ Maintain a close personal relationship with God
- ☐ Keep involved in beneficial work

rearing children is exacting, the parent has the rich satisfaction of seeing them grow up to become responsible praisers of Jehovah. Also, such work is a moral protection for the parent.—1 Tim. 2:15.

THE COMPLETE ANSWER—THE NEW ORDER

²¹ "I share in the preaching work almost every day. I study and pray constantly," said one widow, who confessed: "Yet I still cry myself to sleep every night." Yes, the problems that a single parent must cope with are hard to solve. Often it is a daily battle. Yet, each day that a Christian displays endurance is another slap in the face of Satan who charged that persons would stop serving God when circumstances became difficult. (Job 1:9-11; Prov. 27:11) Realize that no one has a perfect lot in life now. "The entire association of your brothers" is suffering. (1 Pet. 5:9) Someone else's problems may be different from yours, but they are just as intense to that person. Regardless of your problems, conditions could be worse. So try to dwell on the positive aspects of your life as much as you can.

²² Above all, we must keep our eyes fixed on the living hope of a coming system that will bring perfect satisfaction. As the apostle Paul says: "We keep our eyes, not on the things seen [the tribulations that can perplex us and throw us down], but on the things unseen [the hope of eternal life]. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting." Yes, the pressures of today's frustrating system will eventually end. The blessings of the New Order, so near at hand, will be endless. Keep these in clear focus and you will "not give up." (2 Cor. 4:8, 9, 16-18) But what can others do to help those who are single parents? This will be discussed in the following article.

21. (a) Are the problems of a single parent easily solved? (b) What does a faithful course accomplish?
22. (a) What should we keep our eyes on, and why? (b) What will be considered in the following article?

CAN YOU HELP WIDOWS AND FATHERLESS CHILDREN “IN THEIR TRIBULATION”?

THERE is a vast difference between looking upon someone in distress and looking after that one. True worship should change persons from uninterested observers into caring helpers of fellow believers, because “the form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself without spot from the world.”—Jas. 1:27.

² At James 1:27 the original Greek word that is translated “to look after” is defined as ‘having a care for, providing for.’ It conveys the idea of visiting someone to bring needed help. This help is deeply appreciated.

CHILDREN CAN PROVIDE VALUABLE HELP

³ The apostle Paul shows who should be concerned about helping widows by saying: “If any widow has children or grandchildren, let these learn first to practice godly devotion in their own household and to keep paying a due compensation to their parents and grandparents, for this is acceptable in God’s sight.” (1 Tim. 5:4) Though this statement involves grown children, even minors can learn to show their devotion to God by paying “a due compensation” to their parents, who have done so much for them. But how? Some youngsters help out financially, as one did who offered his entire savings from his part-time job to pay an unexpected bill. “This kind of gener-

osity from a 14-year-old son,” said his mother beamingly, “encourages me beyond words.”

⁴ Even if children are not able to contribute money, they can give much more important things—appreciation and obedience. (Prov. 23:22; Eph. 6:1-3) Most single parents ask themselves, “Am I doing a good job in bringing up my child?” Imagine the joy of one single parent when his little child made a card, saying: “I love you very much and I know you try hard.” Well, if you are the child of a single parent, have you recently told that one how much you appreciate his or her sacrifices for you? Are you quick to obey? Do you know what it means to wash the dishes obediently, carry out the garbage, do your homework, come home on time, clean up and, above all, to study your Bible lessons regularly? Such willing obedience is the finest support you can give your parent.

HOW THE CONGREGATION CAN HELP

⁵ “It’s been hard and sometimes I get weighed down,” said a single parent with six children, including

5. (a) What does showing “fellow feeling” mean, and why is this so important? (b) In what ways could our congregation display such “fellow feeling” toward single parents?

1, 2. (a) What is the difference between “looking upon” someone in distress and “looking after” that one? (b) According to James 1:27, what responsibility does true worship bring?

3, 4. (a) According to 1 Timothy 5:4, who should be concerned about helping widows? (b) In what ways can children of single parents help, and what is the finest support these children can give?

a set of 17-month-old twins. "However, once in a while one of the brothers or sisters [in the congregation] will say to me: 'Joan, you're doing a good job. It's going to be worth it.' Just to know that others are thinking of you and that they care is so helpful." This shows how all can help. "All of you," urges the apostle Peter, "be like-minded, showing *fellow feeling*, having brotherly affection, tenderly compassionate." (1 Pet. 3:8) Put yourself in the other person's place. A kind word, a smile right from the heart, can mean so much. Be tenderhearted rather than critical.

⁶ Real love includes more than kind words. Just before urging Christians to put their love into action through deeds, the apostle John wrote: "But whoever has this world's means for supporting life and *beholds* his brother having need and yet shuts the door of his tender compassions upon him, in what way does the love of God remain in him?" (1 John 3:17) The

6. Why would an individual acting like the one described at 1 John 3:17 truly be reprehensible before God?

Mature Christian women can give loving encouragement and help, including material aid



original word for "*beholds*" means not just a casual glance but a deliberate gaze. It is used of a general inspecting an army. Certainly, this one looks with interest for details. So imagine the scene John paints: Someone who has the means to help, after a careful look at his brother perceives a need, then shuts and locks the door of his heart. He refuses to help. How cold! Thankfully, such negative responses are rare exceptions among Jehovah's Witnesses. Countless reports show their generosity toward those "having need."

⁷ However, there have been instances of neglect. Usually this has occurred because there has been a failure to "behold" the need. 'Careful observation,' with interest regarding those in need, was lacking. So what about the situation in your congregation? Are you really conscious of the circumstances of the widows and the orphans? When was the last time you did more than casually greet them? Have you ever invited some over for a meal or a social gathering to get to know them better? Such questions help us to see if we are really 'beholding' the condition of our single-parent families.

⁸ It does not take great wealth to help. Many, *seeing a real need*, have shared extra food or have passed on clothing that their own children have outgrown. Some have even taught single parents certain skills, such as sewing, so that these could manage better. An old proverb says: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." One single parent wrote: "A sister gave me a sewing machine, two lengths of material and sewing lessons. I have saved

7. When needy single-parent families are neglected, what usually is the problem, and how can this be overcome?

8. How have some in the congregation helped needy single-parent families?

hundreds of dollars since that time.”

⁹ However, should single parents normally expect a “flood” of help and become discouraged if such is not forthcoming? One must keep a balanced outlook. While grateful for any assistance offered, one should ask, “Am I doing all I can to handle the situation?” As one single parent put it: “No one can really take on an extra family. If you don’t help yourself, you are not accepting your total responsibility. You have to learn to stand on your own two feet.” There are Bible examples of faithful widows who gave of themselves, rather than *expecting* service from others. (Luke 2:36-38; Mark 12:42-44) One financially poor single parent who struggled for many years to rear two children had a plaque on her wall that read: “Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.” For 12 years, as a full-time evangelizer, she has done just that. She has given of herself, and now, at 73 years of age, still gives to help others. As a result, she has never been in want.—Prov. 11:25.

¹⁰ Mature women undoubtedly played a large role in helping widows and orphans in the first century. Some widows are described as ‘relieving those in tribulation,’ perhaps including single-parent families. (1 Tim. 5:10) In his letter to the Christians in Rome, one fourth of those greeted by the apostle Paul were women who had served faithfully with or in behalf of the congregation. Some were specifically spoken of as working hard or performing labors “in the Lord.” (Rom. 16:3-15) The woman Phoebe, a “minister of the congre-

gation” (evidently she served in an unofficial way caring for the personal needs of others), is described as a “defender of many.” Doubtless, she took the initiative in helping “many,” which strengthened the congregation. Today, like Phoebe, mature Christian women give loving encouragement and help, including their material resources to help “those in tribulation.” —Rom. 16:1, 2.

¹¹ Many aged Christian women provide spiritual and emotional help by being “teachers of what is good,” so that “they may recall the young women to their senses” by offering them understanding counsel. (Titus 2:3-5) As an example, one single mother was in tears after hearing a Bible lecture about marriage. An older Christian woman asked what was wrong. “I guess I’m just feeling sorry for myself,”

11. (a) What type of help can mature sisters give single parents? (b) What example can you give, and do you know of other instances?

Learning certain skills
can help single parents cope
with the cost of living



9. What balanced outlook should single-parent families have regarding help from others?

10. What evidence is there that mature sisters played a large role in helping widows and orphans in the first century?

was the tearful reply. The older woman began to talk with her. She knew how the depressed one felt, because she herself had been abandoned by her husband 20 years earlier. The younger woman remarked: "She was my biggest help. She talked to me a lot and invited me to share with her in the preaching work. She's been very dear to me." Many mature Christian women have reached out to such ones and offered them a "shoulder to cry on," even discussing very personal problems that a Christian man, by himself, could not appropriately handle.

ELDERS—MAKE THE 'HEART OF WIDOWS GLAD'

¹² "The heart of the widow I would make glad," said Job of pre-Christian times.

12. How can elders 'make the heart of widows glad'?

Have you ever invited a single-parent family for a meal, to get better acquainted?



(Job 29:13) He "felt" the pain experienced by widows. Rather than adding to it by a thoughtless word or deed, he acted to cheer them up inside—in the heart. Elders of Christian congregations today can do likewise by reassuring such ones that the congregation is a warmhearted family, by really making them feel a part of it. The overseers may share a comforting scripture that shows the blessings resulting from faithfulness. "Fellow feeling" will help them to try to understand the tremendous emotional and mental pressures that plague many single parents. (1 Pet. 3:8) Consequently, needy ones will feel free to come to them for help. Each of these spiritual men can truly be like "a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country."—Isa. 32:1, 2.

¹³ The Bible foretold that God would restore capable "counselors" among his ancient people. (Isa. 1:26) Similarly, today single parents may look to elders for counsel in making important decisions. When approached, elders should provide "skillful direction," helping the inquirer to recognize the Bible principles involved in the matter under consideration. However, the role of an elder or anyone else approached for help is that of a 'counselor,' not a decision-maker for others.—Prov. 11:14; Gal. 6:5.

¹⁴ An elder may note that, because of the pressures, a single parent is taking a "false step," such as dating an unbeliever. The individual may not be fully aware

13. Why may single parents approach elders for help in making important decisions, and what kind of help should be given?

14. (a) Why should elders try to "readjust" someone who takes a false step? (b) How was the Greek word for "readjust" used in the first century, and how should knowing this affect the way such 'readjusting' is done?

of the seriousness of such a step. "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it," recommends the Bible, "you who have spiritual qualifications try to *readjust* such a man in a spirit of mildness." (Gal. 6:1) Thus elders and others may prevent a "false step" from becoming a wayward course. The Greek word for "readjust" is also rendered 'mend.' (Mark 1:19) In the first century, it was used to describe the setting of a broken bone. A doctor, though he must apply some pressure, would be, oh, so gentle in setting a bone! The objective would be to 'mend' the injury, not to make it worse. So elders who wish to reach the heart of such ones will "in a spirit of mildness" reason with the person gently but clearly, helping him to see *why* applying the counsel of God's Word is in his best interests, thus putting him on the mend spiritually.

¹⁵ At times elders may have to organize help for lonely widows. In Trinidad, a 79-year-old Christian widow fell seriously ill with terminal cancer and needed round-the-clock care. Though she received a small government pension, there were no relatives to help her. To prevent having the task fall on just a few, the elders scheduled teams of Christian women who volunteered to help. For over six months these women cooked and cleaned for their spiritual sister, transported her, washed her clothes and even bathed her when she could no longer move. This was an example of love that truly impressed the neighbors. Naturally the elders cannot do everything necessary in such cases. They usually have their own families for which to care. But they are happy to do what they can, and they appreciate it when others take the initiative by helping out in circumstances of this kind.

15. (a) When might elders have to organize help for needy widows? (b) Why do the elders need help from others in the congregation?

BROTHERS—'RESCUE FATHERLESS BOYS'

¹⁶ The mother in a single-parent family naturally is concerned about the lack of a father's influence in the home, especially on the sons. Men in the congregation should feel as did Job, who said: "I would rescue . . . the fatherless boy and anyone that had no helper." (Job 29:12) Often what is needed is sincere interest. These boys could be personally invited to share with you in witnessing, in certain activities at the Kingdom Hall and even in wholesome recreation. This attention could "rescue" a boy from a worldly course and draw him toward the congregation.

¹⁷ The apostle Peter was one who 'rescued fatherless boys.' He befriended John Mark, even calling him "Mark my son." (1 Pet. 5:13) Mark's mother, Mary, was probably a single parent, because the account says that Peter went to *her* house, not her husband's. (Acts 12:12) Undoubtedly the fine spiritual association Mark had with Peter and other Christian men was instrumental in his becoming a missionary who even wrote a Bible book. He is a good example for boys who must be reared by a mother alone. Naturally, any married brother would have to realize that Scripturally he has a prior responsibility—to care for his own family first. While not neglecting those "who are his own," much good can come from *showing interest* in these fatherless boys to the extent that this is advantageous and as far as one's circumstances allow.—1 Tim. 5:8.

THE BASIS FOR SUCH HELP —SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE

¹⁸ The badge of identification for a real Christian is not merely love, but *self-*

16. (a) What is a chief concern of female single parents regarding their sons? (b) Who can help, and how?
17. (a) Who was a good example of one who 'rescued fatherless boys,' and with what results? (b) In offering help to other children, what would a married brother have to consider?

18. (a) What type of love identifies genuine Christianity, and how did Jesus show it? (b) How can we display such love?

sacrificing love. Jesus said to his disciples: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; *just as I have loved you*, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:34, 35) His example of giving was to be the standard. He "did not please himself." He "became poor *for your sakes*." "He gave himself [through an agonizing death] *for our sins*." Only by imitating this pattern of love could his disciples manifest the attention and care that widows and fatherless children would need during "their tribulation."—Rom. 15:3; 2 Cor. 8:9; Gal. 1:4; Jas. 1:27.

¹⁹ As pressures intensify and it becomes harder to care for our own problems, it is easy to become insensitive to another's plight and to be preoccupied with our own lives. Even some in the first century who were "taught by God to love one another" needed to "go on doing it in *fuller measure*." (1 Thess. 4:9, 10) Should we not look frankly at our own attitude and actions toward our Christian brothers and sisters in unfortunate circumstances? Love like that of Jesus would require that we sacrifice our life for our brothers. However, if we are willing to lay down our life for our brothers, how should we feel about sharing our "bread" when we 'behold our brother having need'?—1 John 3:17.

²⁰ Caring for our Scriptural responsibilities keeps us all very busy. We often wish we could do more to help others. Yet, if we *willingly* do what we can, be assured that Jehovah knows our limitations and appreciates what we do. "As long as we

19, 20. (a) Is it always easy to show self-sacrificing love? Why or why not? (b) Whom should we especially be concerned about helping?

have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith."—Gal. 6:10.

ALL WORK TOGETHER TO ENDURE TRIBULATIONS

²¹ Thus, in summary, single parents can endure by doing the following: (1) Trust God continually now and look to the hope of eternal life when God will satisfy the desires of all. (Ps. 37:3, 4) (2) Maintain a close relationship with God through Bible study and intense prayers. (3) Keep involved in beneficial work, including Kingdom witnessing, managing a household and rearing children. Self-sacrificing love will move all in the congregation to be sensitive to the necessity of helping single parents in need. How? By having "fellow feeling," by showing an interest in their children and by assisting them spiritually and materially, to mention but a few fine deeds in their behalf. How valuable is such help? One single parent said: "I have been through so many unpleasant things that I prefer to forget. However, let me say this: Without the help from loving and faithful brothers and sisters I would never have made it!"

²² Yes, those who genuinely "look after" single-parent families in distress will not only see these endure faithfully. (Jas. 1:27) They will also reflect brightly the personality of our heavenly Father, who "gives help to the widow and to the child who has no father."—Ps. 146:9, *The Bible in Basic English*.

21. (a) What can single parents do to cope with today's pressures? (b) How can others in the congregation help them, and is this help important?

22. What will result from looking after needy widows and fatherless children?



HAPPY TO SERVE THE GOD WHO REMEMBERS

IT WAS the evening of May 24, 1971. A dedicated Christian had been dining with others at a restaurant. On leaving, he started down a flight of stairs. In vain, his right hand grasped for a nonexistent handrail—and in a moment he was plummeting downward. With tremendous force, his head struck a decorative metal item.

Alex Henderson had been severely injured. In fact, so dim were his prospects of survival that his wife received the doctor's condolences. And yet, her husband lived. The results of his fall? A badly fractured skull, three hematomas and

paralysis of the left side. Only after months of unconsciousness would there be even partial improvement.

Today, serious disability prevents Alex Henderson from doing as much as he once did in Jehovah God's service. Yet he is happy, realizing that "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name." (Heb. 6:10) How comforting to know that works of faith and love for God's name are remembered by our heavenly Father!

But how might Christians cope with the aftermath of such a tragic accident? What can sustain them? Before answering such questions—a brief look at the past. Alex supplies the details.

RELIGION IN OUR FAMILY

"Glasgow is where I first saw the light of day back in 1921. Our family belonged to the Church of Scotland. Mother was a devout woman, but unfortunately we lost her to the enemy death when I was a mere lad of 12. (1 Cor. 15:26) Tending a thriving garden seems to have been my father's chief way of getting closer to the Creator. In fact, one of the few times he darkened a church doorway was June 11, 1943, when Janet and I were married.



"World War II saw me in military service for five years. A clergyman offered to arrange my discharge, provided I enter a seminary and become a minister. But I opted to remain in the air force.

"With the war's end, my wife and I were caught up in the social whirl. Janet was a Sunday-school teacher, and at church-sponsored variety shows we sang together the lilting airs of 'bonny Scotland.' Incidentally, although there is a Scottish hymn entitled 'Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah,' I have no recollection of hearing the divine name in those days."—Ps. 83:18.

LEARNING ABOUT THE GOD WHO REMEMBERS

"In November 1947, we and our three-year-old son moved to New York city. Soon Janet's religious interests came to the fore. She had known about Jehovah's Witnesses in Scotland, but now began studying the Bible with them. And in 1950 she symbolized her dedication to God by undergoing water baptism.

"Since my wife was involved with 'those Jehovah's Witnesses,' it seemed appropriate for me to attend one of their meetings. How can I forget the first one—the 1951 commemoration of Jesus' death? (Luke 22:19, 20) All was calm at first. But then an elderly woman cried out: 'Let's sing a song for Jesus!' That did it! They could count on my absence in the future. Of course, the woman was a visitor, not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and their meetings are so orderly that an attending unbeliever can say, 'God is really among you.' (1 Cor. 14:23-25) But you could not have convinced me of that at the time.

"Janet often invited a few Witnesses to our apartment after meetings on Sundays. To avoid contact with them, however, I frequently sat through two showings of motion pictures at some local theater, or resorted to aimless meanderings until the visitors had left and I could 'safely' return home, weary and footsore. How some of

us resist exposure to Scriptural truth!

"Little by little, though, my 'resistance' broke down. Fine wifely conduct, some well-chosen words—and strategically placed magazines like this one—convinced me that the Witnesses 'were not so bad after all.' (1 Pet. 3:1-6) A bout with tuberculosis and some months of hospitalization gave me time to think. By letter, Janet answered my many Bible questions, and before long I heartily embraced the true faith. So did our son Adam, today a Christian overseer. Both of us were baptized on the same day—September 9, 1957."

"Being very conscious of my present limitations, I am grateful for past opportunities to serve the God who remembers. The privilege of serving as presiding overseer soon came my way. Besides engaging in the evangelizing work and other congregational activities, it was a delight to share in constructing a Kingdom Hall where Christians still meet regularly.

"In those days, some individuals good-naturedly called me 'Talk-a-lot Henderson.' Among other things, it was touching to perform marriage ceremonies and to observe the happiness reflected on the faces of those entering wedlock. There were sad occasions, too—times when funeral discourses had to be given. One of these is vividly recalled because of a language problem. Just imagine—an audience of *Spanish* background listening to an *English* talk given with my *Scottish* accent. But there was an interpreter, and I know that they understood, for gradually those saddened faces brightened somewhat on hearing about the marvelous resurrection hope. Yet my finest speaking privilege was that of giving the talk at the congregation's observance of the Lord's Evening Meal in 1959, because it afforded opportunity to make heartfelt expression about the grand salvation made possible by Jehovah God through his beloved Son Jesus Christ. —Matt. 26:26-29; John 3:16; 5:28, 29.

"In 1963, we began associating with another congregation and surely were happy as a family dedicated to Jehovah. But then came my debilitating accident in 1971. Physical impairment has been my lot ever since, but great is my joy in continuing to serve the God who remembers."

FELLOW BELIEVERS LEND A HAND

Alex Henderson's recollection of the accident and its immediate aftermath is scant. So it seems fitting to let others fill in some details . . . and thus help to answer such questions as these: How can Christians cope with adversity? What sustains them? How can others help? And can an infirm Christian aid fellow believers?

For a Christian, a serious accident may call for strong *determination* to 'abstain from blood.' (Acts 15:28, 29) It did for the Hendersons, and their resolute course affected others, for a close associate says: "To see fellow Christians risk their lives to stand firm uncompromisingly against blood transfusion is strengthening to faith." Yes, even amid tragedy, we may upbuild others spiritually by taking the unflinching position that 'live or die, we belong to Jehovah.'—Rom. 14:7, 8.

Fellow believers themselves may be able to render aid. During the months that Alex was in a coma, he required very expensive round-the-clock nursing care. "The congregation (spiritual brothers and sisters individually) helped carry that burden," comments one elder. Here was one deeply appreciated manifestation of the love that identifies Jesus' true followers.—John 13:35.

Christian love can, of course, be displayed in many ways. In retrospect, another overseer remarks: "The operation was successful. Alex was moved to the intensive care unit and remained there for several days. I visited daily . . . During those visits, I would hold Alex's hand and

offer a prayer. Whether he was able to hear, I couldn't very well tell. But, surprisingly, the nurses were quiet and did not move about noisily."

Another elder adds: "Slowly Alex began to respond and become conscious. The process was agonizingly slow. Yet he was able to communicate after a while. As time progressed, his physical limitations were manifest—paralysis of the left side of his body and impaired eyesight. . . . His memory, too, was affected seriously, especially of events regarding his hospitalization and the near past. But his recollection and knowledge of *spiritual* things seemed almost unimpaired. His progress there was amazing."

How easy it is for a disabled person to give up, to sink into despair! But how unwise to do so, especially if the individual is serving Jehovah, "the God who gives hope"! (Rom. 15:13) "Alex held on, as patient as he could be," remarks a fellow believer. "Slowly he began to have his sensibilities restored. He was able to read, talk and function fairly well, but remained paralyzed at the left side. Recovering slowly, he began to attend meetings and later participated in them, both from the platform and by commenting."

Alex Henderson first had to be helped to Christian meetings in a wheelchair. Later, he was able to walk with the leg brace and cane that still must be used. When asked what has sustained him, one factor he readily mentions is "meeting attendance." How vital for Christians to meet regularly and 'incite one another to love and fine works'!—Heb. 10:24, 25.

Singing had always been a significant part of life in the Henderson household. "I've always loved to hear Alex and Janet sing at the Kingdom Hall," says one of their spiritual sisters. But with visual impairment, Brother Henderson could not see the print in the congregational songbook. So this sister thought of a way to lend a

helping hand. "I wrote the entire songbook in large print," she says, "and was thrilled to hear him sing Jehovah's praises again." —Eph. 5:18-20.

FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

"It is not likely that our family will ever forget a particular meeting late in 1975," recalls Alex. "What joy was ours as one of the overseers read a letter stating that I had been appointed an elder! This came as a complete surprise, for the brothers had not discussed this matter with me, although they knew very well that serving my fellow believers in this way would be accepted as a cherished privilege. My initial reaction? 'Me! What can I do?' Humbly, I must admit that it is possible to shoulder such responsibility only with Jehovah's aid, for how can I boast in my own strength?"—Compare 1 Corinthians 1:28-31; Philipians 4:13.

Is it really possible for someone quite handicapped to aid others? Yes, and that fact can well serve as an encouragement to an individual experiencing adversity because of physical disability. One young person remarks: "I appreciate the many fascinating details about the truth with which Brother Henderson spices up his comments and talks." And another says: "It is evident that he has an abundant wealth of knowledge that he is eager to share with all of us. . . . It is amazing how zealous and encouraging he can be in the face of these physical difficulties!"

So let no infirm Christian feel that his or her efforts to praise Jehovah and humbly upbuild fellow believers are ineffective. One elder states: "Just recently has Brother Henderson begun to *stand* at the podium, whereas previously he would sit and speak to the congregation. . . . This simple fact has been faith-strengthening and encouraging to me because I can see that a man faithful in Jehovah's service, who has met with a crippling accident that has inter-

rupted his service, has conquered these things with the help of Jehovah's spirit."

HELPED BY THE GOD WHO REMEMBERS

Indeed, only with Jehovah's aid can Christians successfully face adversity, whatever is its nature. "From where will my help come?" asked the psalmist. "My help is from Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth." (Ps. 121:1, 2) "Jehovah helped me to be patient—to endure," says Alex. "He provided loving assistance and gave me strength to maintain my integrity under difficulties." Janet adds: "When problems arose, I took them to Jehovah in prayer, asking not for miracles but just that He would show me the way to cope and to be content with the outcome, whatever it might be."—1 Pet. 5:6, 7.

Christians are not serving a forgetful God. Jehovah never abandons those who truly love him, and before them he has placed the joyous hope of life eternal. (Ps. 94:14; John 3:16; 2 Pet. 3:13) Hence, optimistic despite his disabilities, Alex urges:

"Be of good cheer, 'persevere in prayer' and carry on in faith. Some day soon the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the tongue of the speechless will cry out in joy—and, yes—the lame will leap about as does the nimble stag. Of course, I yearn for that splendid time. Meanwhile, it is a source of true happiness to serve Jehovah, the God who remembers."—Ps. 100:2; Isa. 35:5, 6; Rom. 12:12.

In Coming Issues

- Should You Believe the Bible?
- Avoiding the Tragedy of Rape
- The Promise of Paradise

QUESTIONS from READERS

● Paul said that a congregational overseer must be "a husband of one wife." Why would he list that among the qualifications for overseers, since no Christian could be a bigamist or a polygamist?

In 1 Timothy 3:2 the apostle Paul wrote: "The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits." The expression "husband of one wife" would mean that the man was free of any suspicion of sexual badness, that he exemplified the Christian standard as to marriage.

Jesus had directed that his disciples should hold to God's original marital arrangement, one man for one woman. (Matt. 19:5, 6) Hence, no person could be baptized as a Christian until he ceased being a polygamist. Yet it was fitting for Paul to emphasize the matter as to elders, because polygamy had been allowed among the Jews and might prevail in lands where Christianity would spread. A new person associating with the congregation should be able to see from the example of the elders that monogamy, not polygamy, was the acceptable arrangement for Christians.

But the phrase "husband of one wife" could imply more. At that time the prevailing moral laxity was reflected in easy, frequent divorces and remarriages.

"In the corrupt facility of divorce allowed both by the Greek and Roman law, it was very common for man and wife to separate, and marry other parties, during the life of one another. Thus a man might have three or four living wives; or, rather, women who had all successively been his wives." (*The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson) It was to be different for a Christian. Only if his mate committed "fornication" (gross sexual immorality) would he be free to get a divorce and marry another. (Matt. 5:32; 19:9) The qualification of "a husband of one wife" would mean that an elder would set the example in not being a man who divorced a wife without

Scriptural grounds and thereafter remarried.

Some scholars have understood 1 Timothy 3:2 to mean that an elder could not at all marry a second time. However, what Jesus had said earlier and what Paul elsewhere wrote indicate that remarriage was not wrong, so it would not make a man reprehensible or disqualify him from serving as an elder in the congregation. Recall that Paul wrote that widows (and, logically, widowers) would do better to marry than to burn with passion or become unoccupied meddlers.—1 Cor. 7:8, 9, 36-39; 1 Tim. 5:13, 14.

An elder's being "a husband of one wife" would also convey the thought of his being innocent of bigamy or adultery. He was to be morally irreprehensible in his married life, loyal and true to his wife. Thus, *The New English Bible* renders the verse in this way, the overseer "must be above reproach, faithful to his one wife."

Consequently, by saying that an overseer must be "a husband of one wife," Paul, in a few words, was stressing from various angles the high moral example to be set by a married elder. Anyone should be able to look at him and sense that he was a living example of the elevated view of marriage found in genuine Christianity.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

October 19: Single Parents Coping in Today's World. Page 15. Songs to Be Used: 87, 110.

October 26: Can You Help Widows and Fatherless Children "in Their Tribulation"? Page 21. Songs to Be Used: 117, 108.



It all began with PRAYER

JEHOVAH GOD is the "Hearer of prayer."

(Ps. 65:2) Fittingly, then, Jehovah's Witnesses pray for God's direction and blessing as they declare the "good news" of his kingdom. (Matt. 24:14) Yes, prayer is essential in finding persons of honest heart. And often such individuals themselves pray with spiritually rewarding results.

In Rio de Janeiro one Sunday morning, some Witnesses were finishing their field service activity, but a few houses remained to be worked. One Christian woman said to the Witness in charge of the group: "I want to continue working a while. For some reason I want to go to that house." He suggested that they leave the remaining houses for another day of door-to-door witnessing activity. But she insisted.

At that particular house, a young girl answered the door and went to call her mother. After a long time, the mother came to the door with her eyes red from tears. Later, she told the Witness that she had been crying and praying to God for help.

The woman had been contacted previously by one of Jehovah's Witnesses but had not shown interest in the Bible's message. Then the sudden death of her husband made her want to talk to the Witnesses again. She even went looking for their Kingdom Hall, but in vain.

By using the Holy Scriptures that Sunday morning, the Witness consoled the unhappy woman. A Bible study was started with her, and that same month she began attending Christian meetings. Not long thereafter, the woman was baptized in symbol of her dedication to God. It had all begun with prayer.