June 15, 1982

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Reaching Your Goal—

Will It Make You Happy?

June 15, 1982
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The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

In This Issue

What Is Your Goal in Life? 3

Keep Pursuing Spiritual Goals 5

Singleness—Its Advantages *and* Opportunities 10

How Does Christ Return? 16

Bold Witnesses of Jehovah *in Action!* 18

"Good Health to You!" 22

"Good Health" and Christian Reasonableness 25

Insight on the News 30

Questions from Readers 31

It Can Change Your Life 32

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning king, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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What Is Your Goal in Life?

DAY after day Kenichi had but one thought: 'Find the gold that must be somewhere in these hills.' For 35 years he made an unrelenting search in the hills outside his Japanese hometown. "I haven't got time for either a wife or friends," he would say. He became a lonely man, driven by the search for the elusive gold.

Then at age 65 Kenichi found what he had been seeking. At last the precious gold was his! What was his reaction after reaching a lifetime goal? He reflected: "At first I just wanted to be rich. But now the gold doesn't really mean very much."

Perhaps you understand why Kenichi felt this way. True, he was rich. But in the quest he had used up 35 of his best years—years that he would never see again. This friendless man found that realizing his goal was simply not worth it. Have there been goals in your life that you worked hard to reach, only to find them unsatisfying? After studying the lives of some "who have realized their dreams," psychologist Daniel Levinson reported that often these "begin to ask, 'Is this all there is? Was it worth all I had to give up along the way?' "

On the other hand, you may be among those who have seen the futility of pursuing materialistic goals and, as a consequence, are undecided about your own goals. The lack of a clear goal in life can be just as harmful as the pursuit of a futile one. Dr. Bennett Leventhal, a child psychiatrist, believes that the behavioral problems of many affluent youngsters exist because their parents cannot offer them "any goals beyond material success." The Chicago suburbs, where Dr. Leventhal practices, have one of the highest suicide rates in the United States—especially among the young. According to an editorial in the respected German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine* (September 12, 1981), the basic cause for the dramatic increase in drug abuse, delinquency, depression and senseless crime among youths is "an increasing feeling of purposelessness." Yes, they have no legitimate goal in life.

What Is a Worthwhile Goal?

Just getting their daily bread is the goal of many. A recent survey of 1,000 American teenagers from various races and economic backgrounds found that "getting a job I enjoy" was listed as their chief goal. And yet, as you may realize, often such a goal can be frustrating and unsatisfying. Still, a consuming interest in getting food, clothing and shelter is the only real goal many have.

The greatest Teacher ever to walk on

"I now found genuine friends and the pleasure of truly helping others spiritually. At last I felt my life was accomplishing something of lasting value to people."—A 27-year-old former motorbike champion

earth pointed to a different goal. He said: "Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for life everlasting." He urged that people elevate their sights and reach out for the provisions that can bring everlasting life. What type of persons would be given such a reward? According to Jesus, it was those upon whom God "has put his seal of approval." (John 6:27) So working to have God's approval and thereby receiving everlasting life in happiness was a goal that Jesus set before his disciples. —2 Peter 3:13.

The Difference a Goal Makes

Jesus' followers made dramatic changes in their life-style because their hearts became centered on this all-important goal. One of these, the apostle Paul, had evidently been born of wealthy parents in a prestigious Middle Eastern city. He had received a higher education from an esteemed Jewish teacher and judge and was making greater progress at a distinguished career than many of his age. Yet, because he was "pursuing down toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God," he considered these things to be "refuse" and devoted his life to doing things having God's approval. Just as was true of other Christians, Paul's devotion and singleness of purpose were clearly evident to onlookers.—Acts 22: 1-3; Galatians 1:14; Philippians 3:5-8, 14.

Similar zeal and singleness of purpose is noted today in genuine Christians. After observing a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses, a Canadian newspaper journalist reported that the key reason for their growth lies "with the incredible sense of commitment and dedication shown by the Witnesses." Many of these have found genuine happiness by seeking the goal of life rather than other pursuits.

For instance, 19-year-old Mark had reached his goal of being one of the best motorbike racers in the state of California (U.S.A.). "I had reached the point where I won many races. I had fame, all the money I wanted and the love of any girl in town," said Mark. "But after winning a big race I asked myself, 'Is this all there is? Here I am at the peak of my life and where is that great sense of accomplishment?' " Others were closely observing his illustrious racing career and were making his life course their goal. "They were trying to get what I had, but the whole thing was ridiculous. I had *nothing* and here they wanted it!" In time Mark studied the Bible seriously with Jehovah's Witnesses and saw the value of seeking a worthwhile goal. After becoming one of the Witnesses, he devoted his life to seeking God's approval and helping others spiritually. Reflecting on his life since then, Mark, now 27 years old, said: "I now found genuine friends and the pleasure of truly helping others spiritually. At last I felt my life was accomplishing something of lasting value to people."

But to what extent does the quest for a goal affect a Christian's life? Just how much effort is needed by a Christian to gain such a goal? And in what ways does the quest for the proper goal bring contentment? What preliminary goals must one work for while striving for the ultimate goal of everlasting life? Such questions will be considered in the following article.

Keep Pursuing Spiritual Goals

"Forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things ahead, I am pursuing down toward the goal for the prize." —Philippians 3:13, 14.

"A GOOD runner from the moment that the barrier falls thinks only of getting forward, sets his mind on the finish and counts on his legs to win for him." Thus first-century historian Lucian described the intensity of those in the footrace. Every nerve and muscle was strained to reach the goal first. The prize, often a crown of leaves, normally brought the victor a lifetime of "the choicest praises," for everyone knew that the victor had spared "neither cost nor pains" until the 'prize was won.'*

[2] Using the runner to illustrate what is needed to succeed as a Christian, the apostle Paul admonished those pursuing the goal of eternal life: "Run in such a way that you may attain [the prize]." (1 Corinthians 9:24) Paul said that he was "stretching forward" (like a runner whose body was bent forward, going all out for the finish) and "pursuing down toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God." (Philippians 3:13, 14) If a Christian "runner" is to receive the reward, the prize of eternal life, not any other pursuit, must become the focal point, or target, toward which his whole life is directed. Is this true of your life?

'Be of This Mental Attitude'

[3] By "forgetting the things behind," the apostle Paul *showed* that this reward was his most important goal. He called the "things behind" a "lot of refuse," "garbage," or "dung." (*Beck; Authorized Version*) This was a strong statement, considering what Paul had left behind when he got into the race for life. (See page 4.) Reflecting on his own example, Paul urged: "Let us, then, as many of

* Observations by ancient Greek poet Pindar in his *Isthmian Odes*, I 40-50.

1, 2. How much effort was put forth by those competing in an ancient footrace, and why? (1 Corinthians 9:24)

3. According to Philippians 3:13, what attitude should mature Christians reflect?

us as are mature, be of this mental attitude."—Philippians 3:5-8, 15, 17.

4 Those to whom the apostle directed his remarks had already entered the race and had attained Christian maturity. But what if you are not baptized and so have yet to enter the race? Then you need to work toward this as a first goal, for those who fail to run will not receive the prize of eternal life. However, if you have just started in the race for life, then, as the first goal, you need to reach out for Christian maturity. This would mean striving to accept the full range of Christian truth and to have your "perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong."—Hebrews 5:14; 6:1.

5 Yet Paul's words, "Let us, . . . as many of us as are mature, *be* of this mental attitude," indicate that even those who are mature need to examine their "mental attitude," for some could be "mentally inclined otherwise." (Philippians 3: 15) For instance, what things did you leave behind? Do you still view them as did Paul? Or have the materialistic and prestigious attainments in the world absorbed more of your time and attention? Of course, a Christian must provide the necessities for himself and his household. Paul worked at the difficult trade of tentmaking—quite an adjustment from the illustrious career he previously followed. But now the "prize" was the big thing in his life, not his secular employment. Is the same true of you?—Acts 18:3; 20: 33, 34.

Training in Godly Devotion

6 In his counsel to Timothy, the apostle Paul drew attention to a quality that is vital for all who want to gain the "prize." Undoubtedly having in mind the years of rigorous training required of athletes, he wrote: "Be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim. . . . to this end we are working hard and exerting ourselves."—1 Timothy 4:7, 10.

7 Godly devotion refers to an attachment to Jehovah *personally*. It is what we are at heart, and is not necessarily determined by our external religious acts.* Therefore, we regularly need to examine why we engage in sacred service. Is it because of what others might think if we do not? Is it to build an impressive record before men? Is it simply because our parents insist? Or is it because we want to please God? At times we all need a gentle push from others. A personal quota or an organizational arrangement may act as a stimulus, but what is done should truly be "deeds of godly devotion."—2 Peter 3:11.

8 By becoming "nourished with the words of the faith" through personal and congregational Bible study, a person can develop godly devotion. (1 Timothy 4: 6) But more is needed than merely covering pages. Ask yourself: What does this tell me about Jehovah? How should this affect my life or my view of others? Will I apply what I have learned? When? How? Such meditation is part of our training toward godly devotion.

9 An athlete, while training, constantly analyzes how to improve. As runners in the Christian race we must be careful

* The original Greek word, *eusebeia,* was used at the time by philosopher Philo to describe a genuinely religious person in contrast to a "counterfeit" worshiper who made only a lavish display of external religious acts.

4. What preliminary goal should be reached by (a) interested ones who are not yet baptized? (b) newly baptized ones?
5. What questions can we use to identify our mental attitude about the goal of life?
6. According to 1 Timothy 4:7, 10, what training is essential to reach the goal of eternal life?
7. What is godly devotion, and how can we examine our motivation?
8. To develop godly devotion, what is needed in addition to Bible study?
9. What experience shows the need to train constantly with godly devotion as our aim?

never to take our spiritual development for granted. One woman who had attended meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses from childhood, as well as having engaged regularly in the field ministry, found that more was needed than simply that routine of Christian activity, because she later became involved in sexual immorality. After recovering, she said: "I had assumed that I was a spiritual person, but I realized that I had just gone through the motions. After my spiritual fall I began to do much more personal study and *applied it to myself.* I begged for Jehovah's help. As a result, I began to grow spiritually, developing for the first time a personal relationship with him."

10 Also, an appreciative eye is needed. For instance, upon enjoying a piece of delicious fruit, you might reflect: 'What a Father we have to provide something so delightful!' Or, upon gazing at a colorful sunset, you might exclaim: 'What an artist our Father is!' In everyday matters make it a practice to take note of evidence of Jehovah's care. You will thus draw closer to him.—1 Thessalonians 5: 18; James 4:8.

'Stretch Forward'—Not Perfect Yet

11 Some in the first-century Philippian congregation, because of being in the way of the truth for some time, may have begun to relax, feeling that they had reached a satisfactory level of spirituality. Paul drew attention to his own example, saying: "Not that I [an apostle, and a Christian for over 25 years] have already received it [the heavenly prize] or am already made perfect, but I am pursuing [it] . . . Brothers, I do not yet consider myself as having laid hold on it."—Philippians 3:12, 13.

10. How can an appreciative eye help us to draw closer to Jehovah?
11. Can a Christian, because of years in the truth, relax?

12 A Christian's life is ever progressive. Continual "advancement" is needed in putting on the new personality. Disqualifying weaknesses must be resisted. (1 Timothy 4:15; 1 Corinthians 9:27) One Witness revealed that she was often haughty and easily upset by others. After being counseled, she realized this could jeopardize her attaining everlasting life. "I then strained to think positively of others. After forcing myself for a while, it became easier," she admitted. "When I would become provoked, I would pray: 'I don't want to be this way, Jehovah. You know I have such a hard time, so please help me!' He really did!" As a goal she sought to overcome a specific weakness and display more of the fruitage of God's spirit. She was blessed, even qualifying to serve as a missionary. Are there goals of this nature that you need to pursue?—Galatians 5:22-26.

13 Realizing that he is not "already made perfect" or that he has not yet gained the prize of eternal life, a Christian keeps watching his attitude toward the ministry. A married couple in the United States examined their circumstances. At the time (back in 1958) the wife was a school's primary teacher and the husband, as a sales executive, was earning over $40 per hour. "Then we began to think of some who served at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses who had given up a fortune to serve there without pay, just to bring the truth to persons like us," the wife said. Stirred by that example, the couple sold their home and, together with their two children, moved to where the need for Kingdom publishers was greater. Both were content to do menial labor to support their family. Their whole life

12. Why must a Christian continue to strive to put on the new personality?
13. What goal did one family reach, and what motivated them?

There are preliminary goals in our Christian course as we strive for the final goal of everlasting life

was now wrapped up in helping others, as they *each* were soon conducting, on an average, 15 weekly Bible studies with interested persons. "We reaped a depth of joy money could never buy. And especially were we delighted to see our children grow up with the same love for Jehovah," stated the husband.—Philippians 4:12, 13.

14 Of course, not every family could make such a move. But an increasing number have made adjustments to have a larger share in the preaching work, perhaps even becoming auxiliary or regular pioneers. During the 1981 service year each month, on an average, 151,180 persons engaged in the pioneer work —an all-time high and nearly 10 percent more than the previous year! Many have made Bethel or missionary service a goal. With the recent opening of Gilead extension schools in Mexico and in the Federal Republic of Germany, many more have been able to reach new and expanded goals in their personal lives. Still others have worked hard to develop a deep love for Jehovah in their children. Dedicated men have reached out for the work of a ministerial servant, an elder, or even a traveling overseer, by developing the required spiritual qualifications. —1 Timothy 3:1-13.

15 Christian wives help by keeping the "prize" foremost. "I'll never forget what my wife said when I read that three of the men I trained to take my job when we moved had just become millionaires," related the Witness mentioned in paragraph 13. "She said: 'Money is here today and gone tomorrow. What we are doing by helping persons spiritually has lasting good.' She always encouraged me *not* to get involved in making big money again. With her help we entered the circuit work when our children were grown." Yes, women who support their husbands spiritually can assist them in obtaining "goodwill from Jehovah."—Proverbs 18:22.

Circumstances Differ

16 The first-century Philippian congre-

14. What are some personal goals that many have reached for?

15. How can Christian wives help their husbands keep the goal of life foremost?

16. (a) When the apostle Paul told the Philippian congregation, "You lacked opportunity," what did he apparently mean? (b) How do we know that Jehovah is not one who is never satisfied with the efforts of his servants?

gation had been exceptionally generous to Paul, but a span of time passed wherein they gave nothing materially. Why? "You lacked opportunity," wrote Paul. (Philippians 4:10) Perhaps difficult times, changed circumstances, or their not knowing where Paul was prevented them from doing what their hearts desired. Our circumstances may also limit what we can do. Jehovah realizes this. As an example, under the Mosaic law Jehovah accepted as a guilt offering what a person could afford, even if it was only eight cups of flour! (Leviticus 5:5-11) All that God asked was that sacrifices be of the best.—Exodus 23:19; Hebrews 13: 15, 16.

17 However, are we truly giving Jehovah our best? Do we keep before us every day the grand reward of eternal life? (Compare Hebrews 12:1, 2.) We can be greatly aided in doing so if we have spiritual goals that we are endeavoring to reach along the way. These become milestones on the racecourse. As we have seen, one of these milestones is baptism. Have you reached that point? What about Christian maturity—genuinely accepting the whole range of Christian truth, no longer doubting, questioning, challenging every new thought? And have you learned to make daily decisions on the basis of Bible principles? If so, you have passed another milestone. Have the fruits of the spirit become deeply imbedded in your personality? Does the field ministry have the same importance to you that it did to our exemplar, Jesus Christ? And what about the reason why you do things? Are you moved by true godly devotion? Even though he was an elder in the Christian congregation, Timothy was counseled that he needed to train himself with this as his aim. Are we attaining some of these goals and reaching out for others, with the grand prize of eternal life always in view? Are we really "stretching forward"?

17. What are like milestones on a racecourse in our pursuit of the final goal, the prize of eternal life?

18 The rewards of such effort are many. As Paul said of godly devotion, "it holds promise of the *life now.*" (1 Timothy 4:8) He well summed up the satisfaction we can have right now despite difficulties: "We know sorrow, yet our joy is inextinguishable. . . . We bless many others with true riches. We are penniless, and yet in reality *we have everything worth having.*"—2 Corinthians 6:10, *Phillips.*

19 Then soon we shall grasp our final goal—'the *life to come.*' Paul could say in anticipation of his heavenly reward: "I reckon that the sufferings of the present season *do not amount to anything* in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18) Yes, all the exertion in the race will amount to nothing in comparison with the blessings of the prized reward of eternal life, whether in heaven or on earth. So keep your eye set on spiritual goals. Run to win. Run as if your very life depended on it—for it does!—Psalm 37:3, 4, 11, 29.

18. What rewards do we receive now from developing godly devotion?
19. Why should each of us pay attention to how we are running in the quest for eternal life?

□ What is the essential goal toward which a Christian must strive, and what "mental attitude" should we have about reaching it?

□ How do we train ourselves with godly devotion as our aim?

□ What are some preliminary goals as we strive for the final goal of eternal life?

□ Is Jehovah never satisfied with our efforts in his sacred service?

Singleness—Its Advantages and Opportunities

A 21-YEAR-OLD schoolteacher was asked by an older girl friend: "Do you not want to get married?" This young teacher, who appreciated the advantages of her singleness, replied: "I guess I have never seriously thought about it." Surprised at her reply, the friend said: "Well, when you get older you will wish that you had. Everybody should get married." When you consider the multitude of God's servants who are married you can understand why many, like this well-meaning friend, feel that singleness is an undesirable condition, making a person's life incomplete.

[2] A person may be single because of being too young or otherwise unable to take on the responsibilities of marriage. Others have lost a mate through divorce or death. In the United States one out of every three households is currently headed by a single person. There has been a 64-percent increase of people living alone in just 10 years. So the chances are that even if you are not single, someone close to you is. How can you as a married Christian have more "fellow feeling" for single persons who comprise a significant part of God's household? Of course if you are single then you know the difficulties of being happy and single in any society where marriage is regarded as the norm. Just how should you view your singleness?—1 Peter 3:8.

[3] Jesus Christ revealed that singleness "on account of the kingdom" was a gift from God. This was a totally new concept, for among the Jews of his day marriage was considered a "universal obligation" and singleness a reproach. "He who has no wife is not a proper man," was one of the sayings of the Jewish rabbis. However, Jesus encouraged his disciples to "make room" for the gift of singleness and not feel obligated to marry.—Matthew 19:10-12.

[4] So marriage and singleness are both

1. What is the opinion of many about singleness, and why do some feel this way?
2. Why should both single and married Christians be interested in our subject?
3. (a) During Jesus' time, how was singleness viewed? (b) How did Jesus consider singleness "on account of the kingdom"?
4. What has been the course of many Christians, and how do these feel about their circumstances?

gifts from God. During the early days of Christianity, as well as in our day, many have pursued a life of singleness, "on account of the kingdom."* Rather than bemoaning their circumstances, many of these feel as did one never-married 41-year-old Christian woman who recently said: "I would not take anything for the years that I have spent as a single person." Why do many feel this way?

Enlarged Opportunities

5 The examples of married Christians such as the apostles of Jesus, as well as Aquila and Priscilla, show that couples can make valuable contributions in God's service. (Acts 18:26-28; 1 Corinthians 9:5) Yet the apostle Paul showed that a single person has an opportunity for an enlarged field of service. He wrote: "The unmarried man [or woman] is anxious for the things of the Lord, how he [or she] may gain the Lord's approval. But the married man [or woman] is anxious for the things of the world, how he [or she] may gain the approval of his wife [or her husband], and he [or she] is divided." (1 Corinthians 7:32-34) A single person is not "divided" because of the responsibilities of marriage, which bring "tribulation in [the] flesh," and therefore can be "anxious" or eager for spiritual matters. Note in the box the extent to which sacred works filled the lives of those listed. The ability to engage "without distraction" in God's service, which includes foremost the preaching work, is a rich treasure. Single persons usually have more time for study and meditation. This can improve the "spirit," or inner motivation, bringing that person closer to Jehovah as he or she concentrates on being 'holy in body and spirit.' Not having a marriage partner, many learn to rely heavily on God, looking for his direction and counsel. Unmarried Christians are often able to accept privileges of service that married couples could not. No wonder Jesus called this privilege of remaining as a single Christian a "gift"!—Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 7:28, 35.

6 Those who 'make room for the gift' are not necessarily persons with some

* Professed Christian writer Athenagoras wrote around 175 C.E.: "You would find many among us, both men and women, growing old unmarried, in hope of living in closer communion with God." —*A Plea for the Christians*, chapter 33.

5. How can unmarried Christians take advantage of opportunities that their circumstances open up?

6, 7. (a) Does having the gift of singleness mean that one is no longer attracted to the opposite sex and will never marry? (b) What is meant by 'making a decision in one's heart'? (c) What question may be in the mind of some single persons?

SOME SINGLE PERSONS IN THE BIBLE

Jesus: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work."—John 4:34.

Paul: 'I slaved for the Lord and thoroughly bore witness. I did not make my soul dear to me.'—Acts 20:19-24.

Jeremiah: "O Jehovah my strength and my stronghold, and my place for flight in the day of distress." —Jeremiah 16:19.

Jephthah's daughter: 'She never had relations with a man. Yearly, women of Israel would go to her at the sanctuary to commend her.' —Judges 11:39, 40.

Anna: 'She was a widow now eighty-four years old, who was never missing from the temple, rendering sacred service night and day with fastings and supplications.' —Luke 2:37.

Dorcas: "She abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy." —Acts 9:36.

special "gift" in their emotional makeup whereby they no longer are attracted to the opposite sex. These have not made some vow of celibacy, as if they *never* intended to marry, but have made a "decision," or judgment, in their hearts to make a success of their single state.* (1 Corinthians 7:37) These persons have weighed in their hearts the advantages of singleness. On the basis of this 'evidence' their hearts begin to 'judge' singleness as a "gift" and they "make room" for it. —1 Corinthians 7:38.

7 But what if you have a strong desire to get married? Did not Paul say it was better to marry than be inflamed with passion?—1 Corinthians 7:9.

Why Such a Strong Desire?

8 It is only natural to want to get married. God created us with that desire. (Genesis 2:18) But is this strong yearning because a person is in the "bloom of youth," when there is the initial surge of sexual drive? Paul recommended that one delay marriage till this period is "past." Such a wait may seem impossible to a young person. Some in the first century also felt that they just *had* to get married. Yet while these were "seeking a wife" others who were married were "seeking a release" from their situation! Marriage, though it might serve as a protection against immorality, does not solve all problems. One 35-year-old single Christian said: "When as an elder I see people's lives crushed by a bad marriage, it is sobering. I am not against marriage but I feel that there is no need to rush." Research studies show that American women who married before age 18 are *three times* as likely to be involved in a divorce as those who waited until they were 24! The divorce rate for teenage husbands in the United States is three times as high as for the general population. Young single years may be used wisely in developing a fine relationship with Jehovah as well as the qualities and skills needed to become a good mate.—1 Corinthians 7:27, 36.

9 Many Christians have grown older without marrying. In time, some of these, because of a strong desire for companionship, have rushed into marriage with an unbeliever, thinking that *any* mate is better than none. Yet you may know of some that did this only to find themselves just as lonely with a mate with whom they could not communicate. However, how can a single person remain "settled in his heart"?—1 Corinthians 7:28, 37, 39.

Draw from an Interchange of Encouragement

10 Successful unmarried Christians are *people oriented.* The apostle Paul, himself a single man, wrote: "I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you in order for you to be made firm; or, rather, that there may be an interchange of encouragement." (Romans 1:11, 12) Paul was keenly interested in people and wanted to extend to fellow believers a "spiritual gift." In return he was encouraged. The same is true today.

11 A 28-year-old single Christian woman invited many of the younger sisters

* The original Greek word translated "decision," *krino,* means "to judge, to pronounce an opinion." The word is used at John 7:51 where Nicodemus says that before a person is judged, it is necessary to listen to evidence. This would take time.

8. (a) Why might some young single persons have a strong desire to marry? (b) What advantages are there in postponing marriage till one is "past the bloom of youth"?

9. (a) What have some done because of a desire for companionship, and often with what results? (b) What question here confronts single persons?

10. According to Romans 1:11, 12, what was the apostle Paul's desire, and how was he benefited?

11. What experience illustrates how a person may be encouraged through extending a "spiritual gift"?

1. Extend yourself spiritually for others
2. Draw power from above when problems abound
3. Resist improper desires at once

in the congregation to her home for a small gathering, desiring to share a "spiritual gift" through wholesome association. The following day one teenager threw her arms around this sister and said: "You will never know how much that gathering meant to me and how I needed the encouragement. I thought that I just could not take the problems at home with my stepmother any longer. Now I feel that I can cope." As the single sister related this experience, she said, with tears: "I never forgot that. In the long run she did me a real favor, because I felt so good about what she said." Cultivating a personal interest in others of our 'spiritual family,' as appropriate, can help in overcoming loneliness. Yet, effort is needed to develop meaningful friendships.*—Mark 10:29, 30.

12 However, even beyond opportunities within the Christian congregation to offer 'spiritual gifts,' there are those that open up with the disciple-making work. The one giving is often refreshed to see the progress of the learner and to note the lasting comfort that Bible truth can

* Please see the articles "But What Do I Say? —Developing the Art of Conversation" and "How Can I Make Real Friends?" in the January 22 and March 22, 1982, issues of the companion magazine *Awake!*

12. What opportunities does the disciple-making work open up?

bring. So as you 'take the lead' in showing love to those both inside and outside God's household, your own life will be richer and you will find it easier to 'remain settled in heart.'—Romans 12:2; Ecclesiastes 11:1; Luke 6:38.

Draw on Power from Above

13 While imprisoned in Rome, the apostle Paul had to face a difficult situation alone. He wrote: "But the Lord stood near me and infused power into me." (2 Timothy 4:17) By this power Paul was faithful and was delivered either literally or symbolically from "the lion's mouth." When symbolic "lions" come into your life, do you turn to your tender Father for help? Do you pour out your heart to him, knowing that even if no one else does, *he understands* your needs and will stand near you?—1 Peter 5:6-9.

14 One 53-year-old single sister was crushed when she lost her job. "I begged Jehovah to help me to find some work just to keep things going. Before the week was out I had a new job! From that day on I determined to take a day at a time and rely on Jehovah's care. He has never let me down." In 1982, after 26 years of pioneering, her prayer for a spiritually qualified mate was answered as she became the wife of a widowed traveling overseer. True, Jehovah does not always answer our prayers in exactly these ways, but he will strengthen us to deal with whatever problems may persist.—1 Corinthians 10:13.

Self-Control

15 "I feel I just cannot make it alone anymore," wrote one Christian woman. "I find myself with a strong sexual drive and for years I have been unable to find a suitable Christian husband. I have been told just to go home and control myself. But how?" Coping with such emotions is not easy. To master sexual desires a single person must realize *when* he or she must start bearing down with self-discipline. For instance, in Proverbs 7: 6-23, a young man loses his self-control and in a sexual frenzy 'goes after' a prostitute. However, he did not immediately reach this stage. Preliminary steps included (1) walking on her street at night, (2) allowing her to kiss him, and (3) listening to her immoral suggestions. Each step made it harder to have self-control until there was no turning back. As soon as he saw himself pursuing step one, he needed to stop!—Galatians 5:22, 23.

16 No real Christian would follow the literal steps of this man, but what about one's thoughts? Could a person mentally begin 'going down the street to her house' by dwelling on immoral thoughts? *Right then put on the brakes!* Failing to do so may result in mentally progressing to further steps such as masturbation or eventual sexual immorality.

17 Because wrong desires are pleasurable to our imperfect flesh, they are not easily dismissed. "Those who belong to Christ Jesus *impaled* the flesh together with its passions and desires." (Galatians 5:24) Impalement was a harsh, painful execution. So take harsh measures *with yourself* to deaden or "kill" such improper desires—right at the start before they become entrenched. If a TV program begins to excite sexual passion, then turn it off or switch to another

13. How can 2 Timothy 4:17 be especially encouraging to single Christians?
14. (a) With what pressure was one single sister confronted, and how was she blessed? (b) What confidence should 1 Corinthians 10:13 give us?
15. (a) To master sexual desires a person must realize what? (b) How is this illustrated in Proverbs chapter 7?
16. While no real Christian would follow the course of the immoral man, what could he possibly do?
17. (a) Why is it necessary to impale the flesh together with its passions? (b) How does a Christian do this?

program at once. Be circumspect as to movies that you watch or literature that you read. Guard your conversation and how you look upon those of the opposite sex.—Matthew 5:28-30; Colossians 3:5.

18 When it is time for personal or congregational Bible study, do we resist any urge to neglect these? One Christian, in an effort to impale impure passions when these emotions were especially strong, forced himself to get up out of bed at night and read *out loud* from the Bible and orally summarize each paragraph until such urges subsided. Christians have at times compelled themselves to pray fervently to Jehovah for help right there and then. As long as a Christian is sincerely striving to impale "sexual appetite" it is unlikely that he will progress to fornication.—Hebrews 4:16.

The Effort Is Worth It!

19 Singleness 'for the Kingdom's sake' and marriage—both are gifts from God. Yet *both* require effort if a Christian is to be successful. Regardless of our status, we can build a close relationship with our God and find fulfillment in life. Even if you "make room" for the gift of singleness only for a short time, what counts is that you use it wisely.

20 Realize that Jesus put the gift of voluntary singleness in a very noble position. Every mature Christian should feel as did Jesus and not think of it as a condition to be pitied. Jehovah highly values the sacrifices made by single persons who have chosen to do what he delights in. (Compare Isaiah 56:4, 5.) Jehovah will not forget them. Some who survive into the new earth may enjoy the privileges of marriage, and like the children of Noah after the global flood, have opportunities to take part in the divine commission to 'fill the earth.' (Genesis 9: 1) Such may be a blessing in addition to those already enjoyed by single Christians. In God's new order he will 'satisfy the desire of every living thing' and give to all the 'requests of their heart.' So be assured that all will find full happiness in accord with God's will at that time. —Psalm 37:3, 4; 145:16.

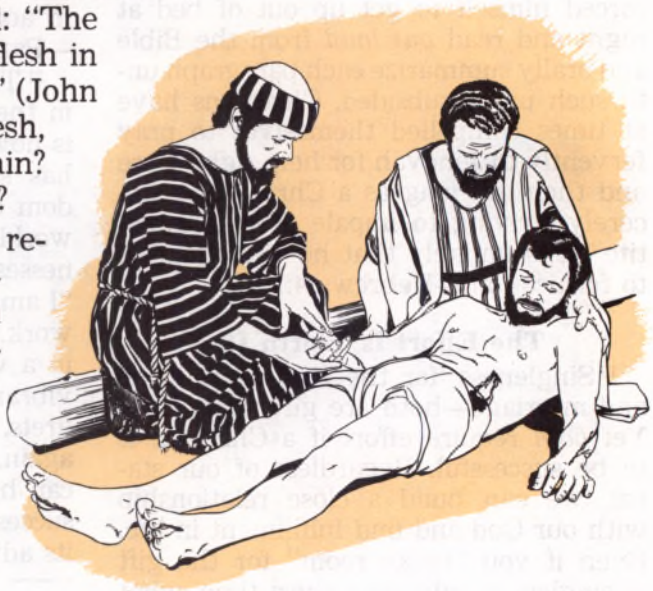
21 The former schoolteacher mentioned in the opening paragraph of this article is now 83 years old and still single. She has spent 57 years in full-time Kingdom service, including 56 years at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses. How does she feel about her life? "I am fully satisfied with my life and my work. I am busier now than ever before in a work that I dearly love," said this vibrant Christian woman. "I have no regrets. I would make the same decision again." Yes, you, too, if you are single, can have such satisfaction by making a success of singleness—reaping to the full its advantages and opportunities.

18. What have some single Christians done to deaden improper sexual desires, and with what result?
19. Does our relationship with God depend upon whether we are married or single?
20. (a) How should all mature Christians view singleness? (b) What assurance can single persons have about the future?
21. (a) How has the schoolteacher mentioned earlier used her single life? (b) How can other single Christians feel the same way?

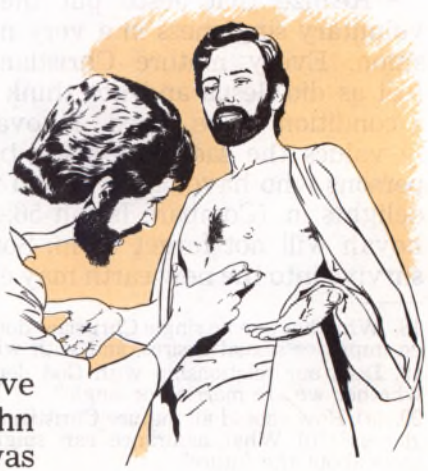
- How should singleness 'on account of the Kingdom' be viewed?
- What enlarged opportunities are there for single Christians?
- Why is it better not to give up one's singleness hastily?
- To remain 'settled in one's heart,' a single person needs what three things?

How Does Christ Return?

JESUS CHRIST needed to die in order to give his perfect human life as a ransom for us. He once explained: "The bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world." (John 6:51) Having given us his flesh, would he ever take it back again? Will Jesus return as a human?



The Bible says that Christ returns in glory with all the angels, and that he 'sits down on his glorious throne.' (Matthew 25:31) If Jesus were to come and sit as a man on an earthly throne, he would be lower in station than the angels. But he comes as the mightiest and most glorious of all these spirit sons of God, and he is therefore invisible, just as they are.—Philippians 2:8-11.



Yet there are many who believe that Christ took his fleshly body to heaven, and that he will return in a flesh-and-blood body. They point to the fact that more than once the resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples in a fleshly body to show them that he was alive. Once Jesus asked the apostle Thomas to put his hand into the hole in his side so that Thomas would believe that he had actually been resurrected. (John 20:24-27) Does this not show that Jesus was

raised from the dead in the same body that was nailed to the stake?

No, for Jesus simply materialized or took on a fleshly body, as angels had done in the past. In order to convince Thomas as to who he was, he used a body with wound holes. He appeared fully human, able to eat and drink, just as did the angels that Abraham once entertained.—Genesis 18:8.

Though Jesus appeared to Thomas in a body similar to the one in which he was put to death, he also took on different bodies when appearing to his followers. Thus Mary Magdalene at first thought that he was a gardener. At other times Jesus' disciples did not at first recognize him. In these instances it was not his personal appearance that served to identify him, but it was some word or action of his that they recognized.—John 20:14-16; 21:6, 7; Luke 24:30, 31.

Consider the manner in which Jesus left his apostles on his way to heaven. The Bible says: "While they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud caught him up from their vision." (Acts 1:9) So when Jesus began going into the sky, a cloud hid him from the literal eyesight of his apostles. The departing Jesus, therefore, became invisible to them. They could not see him. It was in a spiritual body that he went to heaven. (1 Peter 3:18) The angels present on that occasion told the apostles: "This Jesus who was received up from you into the sky will come thus in the same manner as you have beheld him going into the sky." (Acts 1:11) Thus Christ's return also would be invisible, in a spiritual body.

Bold Witnesses of Jehovah in Action!

Christianity's Expansion as Told in the Book of Acts

JESUS CHRIST had declared the good news of God's kingdom for some three and a half years. He had urged his followers to let their light shine. But they were few in number, and Jesus had foretold a worldwide preaching work. (Matthew 5:14-16; 24:14) Could his disciples ever accomplish such a ministry? Even if they wanted to perform it, what help would they have?

The faithful disciple Luke, an educated physician, furnished answers to these and other questions in the divinely inspired book entitled "Acts of Apostles." (Compare Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1, 2.) Both external and internal evidence points to Luke as the writer of Acts. Likely, it was written in Rome about 61 C.E.—Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11.*

Acts begins with Jesus' ascension to heaven and ends with Paul's Roman imprisonment. Hence, it covers some 28 years, from 33 to 61 C.E. In its broad review of early Christianity it is, indeed, a stirring account about bold witnesses of Jehovah in action.

How can the book of Acts benefit us? Among other things, it can (1) show us that Jehovah's hand is with his faithful witnesses; (2) make us aware of the holy spirit's power and influence; (3) strengthen our confidence in divinely inspired prophecy; (4) help us to put God first during tests of faith; (5) encourage us to be bold in giving a thorough witness; (6) assist us to endure in the face of persecution; (7) motivate us to be self-sacrificing in God's service; (8) prompt us to be diligent students of God's Word; and (9) stimulate our faith in the marvelous Kingdom hope.

Peter—A Bold and Faithful Witness

As the book of Acts opens, Jesus is about to bid his disciples farewell. Will he restore the kingdom to Israel at this time? They want to know. But he tells them that 'it does not belong to them to get knowledge of the times or seasons which the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction.' Though Jesus' followers then lacked a full understanding of the Kingdom, he commissions them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and then "to the most distant part of the earth." How will they possibly do this work? In the power of the holy spirit!—Acts 1:6-8.

On the day of Pentecost about 120 of Jesus' disciples are assembled in an upper room in Jerusalem when they are filled with holy spirit. This enables them to witness boldly in the various languages of Jews and proselytes who have come from distant lands to celebrate Pentecost at Jerusalem. The apostle Peter takes the lead in witnessing.

* For details, see *Aid to Bible Understanding*, page 32, and *"All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial,"* pages 198, 199. Both books are published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

He explains that the outpouring of the spirit is in fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. (Acts 2:14-21; Joel 2:28-32) That very day 3,000 souls 'embrace the word heartily and are baptized.' (Acts 2:41) It is obvious that Jehovah's hand is upon his witnesses. The holy spirit's power and influence are evident. Furthermore, Peter's words strengthen our confidence in the fulfillment of inspired prophecy.

Next, a lame man is miraculously healed, giving further evidence of the power of God's holy spirit. Then Peter and John give a bold witness concerning Jesus. This is too much for the religious leaders, who arrest the apostles and try them the next day. Outspokenly, Peter and John point out that salvation is available only through Jesus Christ. When commanded to stop preaching, they refuse. After being threatened and released they meet with fellow believers and then all join in asking God to help them to "keep speaking [his] word with all boldness." Accordingly, "they were one and all filled with the holy spirit and were speaking the word of God with boldness." When again ordered to stop preaching, they fearlessly reply: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 4:19, 20, 29-31; 5:29.

How this should help Jehovah's modern-day witnesses to put God first during tests of faith! And how it should encourage us to be bold in giving a thorough witness, even when persecuted!

Stephen, one of seven men appointed by holy spirit to distribute food, also gives a powerful witness when brought before the Sanhedrin. When he points out the judges' guilt in Jesus' death, they become enraged and stone him to death. Stephen's tranquillity in all of this is a fine example, encouraging present-day witnesses of Jehovah to endure in the face of persecution.—Acts 6:1–7:60; compare Philippians 4:6, 7, 13.

Persecution increases, but it does not stop the disciples. Rather, wherever they are scattered they keep on "declaring the good news," with Jehovah's support and blessing. (Acts 8:4-8) Soon, the bitter persecutor Saul of Tarsus is converted when Jesus personally appears before him in a bright light, and Saul is blinded by its glory. Ananias restores Saul's sight, and this former persecutor, later known as the apostle Paul, becomes a bold witness for God and Christ.—Acts 9:1-30; 22:6-11.

The congregation now 'enters into a period of peace, being built up; and as it walks in the fear of Jehovah and in the comfort of the holy spirit it keeps on multiplying.' (Acts 9:31) Peter raises the beloved Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead. Later, he receives a call to go to Caesarea, where he declares the "good news" to Cornelius and his household. They become believers and the holy spirit is poured out upon them. Having realized that "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him," Peter baptizes them—the first uncircumcised Gentiles to become Jesus' disciples. —Acts 10:1-48.

Shortly thereafter, Herod Agrippa I executes the apostle James and has Peter arrested for the purpose of executing him too. But the apostle experiences an angelic deliverance from prison. Moreover, despite hardship and persecution, Jehovah's hand is with his witnesses and 'the word of Jehovah goes on growing and spreading.'—Acts 11:19-21; 12:24.

Paul's Three Evangelizing Tours

By holy spirit, Barnabas and Saul are set apart and sent forth from Antioch, Syria. (Acts 13:2, 3) On the island of Cyprus many become believers, including the proconsul Sergius Paulus. Time and again the Kingdom witnesses must leave cities because of violent persecution. For

Like Peter at Pentecost, all faithful Christians are bold witnesses of Jehovah

instance, in the city of Lystra Paul is even stoned and left for dead. But, when he revives, he is back at his work of witnessing and encourages others to remain in the faith, saying: "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations." (Acts 14:22) How all of this encourages Jehovah's modern-day witnesses to endure in the face of persecution!

A meeting of the apostles and older men at Jerusalem settles the question of circumcision. (Acts chap. 15) No, circumcision is not to be required of Gentile converts to Christianity. The holy spirit plays a role in this, for the letter sent out on the matter says, in part: "The holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things, to keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication."—Acts 15:28, 29.

Silas accompanies Paul during his second evangelizing trip, and en route Timothy joins them. In a vision, Paul is entreated to step over into Macedonia to provide help. And, true to the self-sacrificing attitude of the apostle and his associates, they take this as their assignment in God's service. Are we similarly motivated when afforded opportunity to expend ourselves in Jehovah's service? —Acts 16:9, 10.

At Philippi, Kingdom witnessing results in an uproar, and Paul and Barnabas are imprisoned. An earthquake frees them, but they do not rush away. Instead, they preach to the jailer and his household, whereupon these all become baptized believers.—Acts 16:11-34.

Next, it is on to Thessalonica, and then Beroea. The Beroeans 'are more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, for they receive the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily to see whether the things they are being told are truly so.' (Acts 17:10, 11) Should this not prompt us to be diligent students of God's Word —modern-day Beroeans as it were?

Upon arriving in Athens, Paul witnesses boldly in the marketplace and is taken to the Areopagus by philosophers. There he gives a grand witness to Jehovah's creatorship, to the oneness of the human family, and to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The result? Some become fellow believers. (Acts 17:16-34) Going on to Corinth, the apostle finds so much

interest in God's truth that he remains there for 18 months.—Acts 18:1-17.

After returning to Antioch and spending some time there, Paul begins his third evangelizing trip. In Ephesus he witnesses boldly, and God keeps performing extraordinary works of power through him. The ministry in Ephesus proves fruitful, but it also leads to an uproar in this city teeming with worshipers of the goddess Artemis. But the apostle departs unharmed.—Acts 19:8–20:1.

On his way back to Jerusalem, Paul calls together the older men of the Ephesus congregation. He reminds them of his self-sacrificing service while in their midst. He had been busy as a Kingdom proclaimer and could point to his 'teaching publicly and from house to house.' What a fine example for those shouldering responsibility among Jehovah's people today!—Acts 20:17-35.

Persecution Does Not Stop Kingdom Witnessing

Although Paul is warned against setting foot in Jerusalem, he does not turn back. (Acts 21:10-14) James and other older men of the congregation rejoice greatly when Paul tells them about God's blessing on his ministry among the nations. But when the apostle appears in the temple, what a different reception he gets! Jews from the province of Asia stir up the entire city against him, and Roman soldiers rescue him just in time. Later, in a divided court of Pharisees and Sadducees, Paul raises the question of the resurrection, setting them one against the other. As the dissension becomes increasingly violent, Roman soldiers snatch Paul away. He is secretly sent to Governor Felix at Caesarea. Before the governor he defends himself against his accusers. But the apostle is kept in custody for two years. He later appears before Porcius Festus, gives a bold witness, and appeals to Caesar. (Acts 25:11) Still later, Paul appears before King Herod Agrippa II. Although Agrippa recognizes Paul's innocence, the apostle has appealed to Caesar and therefore is sent on to Rome.

The trip to Rome is interrupted by a violent storm. The ship runs aground and is wrecked, but, even as an angel has assured Paul, all those aboard are able to make it safely to shore on the island of Malta. Three months later Paul and his traveling associates set sail for Rome. In the Roman capital, for two years Paul remains 'in his own hired house and receives kindly those who come to him.' For what purpose? So that he might witness to them, for we are told that he was busy "preaching the kingdom of God to them and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with the greatest freeness of speech, without hindrance." —Acts 28:30, 31.

So it is that Acts concludes with an account of faithful Kingdom witnessing. Yes, the book of Acts highlights the grand Kingdom hope. And this inspired account should move present-day servants of God to be like their first-century counterparts—bold witnesses of Jehovah in action!

In Our Next Issue

- **Showing Our Appreciation to God**
- **Teasing—Good or Bad?**
- **What Birth of the Nation Has Meant for Mankind**

"Good Health to You!"

WITH such words the first-century governing body of Christians closed a letter to the congregations. The Greek expression they used had the thought, 'Be made strong, keep well, be in health.'—Acts 15:29.

Though "Good health to you" served as what we call a letter's complimentary closing, it touches on something dear to all of us—our health. People have long sought better health. Yet have you noticed how many today seem *overly concerned* about it? Have you wondered what is balanced for a Christian?

What Affects Views of Health

The surging interest in health may reflect how deeply people sense their mortality. Death comes so quickly! (Psalm 90: 10) You can understand why, if a person feels that his present life is all there is, he might do almost anything to avoid disease conditions that could speed death's approach.

Also, views on health are affected by the widespread distrust of "the establishment," including authorities in conventional medicine. This distrust causes many persons to doubt the quality of commercial food products. Having heard about health damage from too much refined "junk food" with chemical additives, millions choose to limit how much processed food they eat. Many feel so strongly about "natural foods" that they will eat virtually nothing else. Others, knowing about tragedies such as the birth defects from thalidomide, are suspicious about drugs. They suspect that there may be side effects of drugs that pharmaceutical firms strongly promote and that a few busy physicians prescribe without careful monitoring.

An outgrowth of all of this is that people are exercising more independence in health matters. You probably acknowledge that each adult ought to make his own health decisions, based on reliable information about the various choices. But are there dangers that we need to consider? Can the Bible help us in health matters?

Christianity Is Good for Your Health

The first-century governing body's letter explained that Christians should 'abstain from fornication and from blood.' (Acts 15:28, 29) This is wise even from the health standpoint. Fornication exposes persons to venereal diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Blood transfusions

have infected countless thousands with hepatitis and diseases like the often-fatal virus that Pope John Paul II received.

Think, too, of the better health that comes from applying God's counsel relating to drunkenness and smoking. Dr. Joel Posner reported that 60 percent of the money spent in the United States for health care is for illnesses connected with the use of alcohol and tobacco.—Proverbs 20:1; 2 Corinthians 7:1.*

The Bible protects our health in other ways too. You can understand that this is so when you consider what it says about keeping clean. (Exodus 30:17-21; Deuteronomy 23:12-14) Even the overall spirit that a Christian develops as he studies the Bible can improve his health. By pursuing mildness, kindness and love, he lives more peacefully with others, and this protects his health. (Proverbs 14:30) Further, the Christian's high regard for life moves him to take reasonable precautions to avoid risks. For example, he may be more conscientious than most in using automobile safety belts. (Acts 17:24, 25, 28) Dr. K. L. White, deputy director of the Rockefeller Foundation's division of health sciences, said that such matters of "lifestyle and personal behavior" are "major factors in influencing the health of individuals."

Then there is this Bible counsel: "Is it honey that you have found? Eat what is sufficient for you, that you may not take too much of it and have to vomit it up. The eating of too much honey is not good." (Proverbs 25:16, 27) Whatever may be the relative merits of honey versus sugar as a sweetener, that counsel provides a rule for good health: Make moderation a key to your diet. If a person can eat a varied diet and avoids eating to excess, as well as too much of any one food, he will reap health benefits. The comments about honey have extended value as to health efforts.

* See the chapter "Better Health and Longer Life—How?" in *Happiness—How to Find It*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Vitamins, Minerals and Herbs

Improved nutrition has contributed to better health. A key has been the discovery of our vitamin and mineral needs. For example, the deficiency diseases beriberi, pellagra, scurvy and rickets can be cured or avoided by a balanced diet with adequate vitamins B, C and D. Also, as doctors have become more involved with nutritional research, reports have appeared about other diseases that seem to respond to large amounts of certain vitamins and minerals given under medical supervision.

Yet many persons have on their own begun taking large doses of food supplements, as if serious deficiencies abound. Some who pursue such self-medication feel, 'If a little is good, then more is better,' and, 'Vitamins and minerals can't hurt you because your body gets rid of any excess.' It is true that if you take too much of certain vitamins they may 'pass along into the intestines and are discharged into the sewer,' the effect merely being expensive body wastes. (Matthew 15:17) But if you take too much of other vitamins and minerals, they can cease to be nutrients and start to act as drugs, even being harmfully toxic.

By taking excessive amounts of certain vitamins, persons have damaged body organs, or worse. As just one example, a man in Britain who was taking large amounts of carrot juice and vitamin A died from the resulting hypervitaminosis. Numerous children, too, have been harmed by excessive vitamins given by parents who were sincere but misinformed on nutrition. As to minerals, an ophthalmologist and eye surgeon makes this personal observation: "I'm concerned

about many who are taking massive doses of calcium, copper, zinc and chromium. I'm starting to find blinding conditions in 20- to 30-year-old brothers and sisters." Recall the Bible's wise counsel about honey. Whether it be a synthetic drug or a natural vitamin, mineral or herb, too much may hurt you.

Yes, care is in order as to herbs also. Obviously some herbal remedies have value; digitalis and quinine, for example, are from "herbal" sources. A study in Kenya showed that "at least 50 per cent of the herbal remedies used by the witch doctors have genuine medical value." Yet that means that many have no known value. And the fact that Jehovah purposed "vegetation" to be man's original food does not mean that all herbs are safe. Tobacco and marijuana are "herbs." —Genesis 1:29, 30.

Even herbs that seem to help one person may endanger another. A traveling minister in Ohio had stomach distress. Concerned friends urged him to take a common herbal remedy. When the problem persisted he went to a medical doctor whose extensive tests located gallstones. The doctor also discovered that the minister's blood was not clotting; a cut might have caused him to bleed to death. When the doctor learned of the herbal remedy, he said that it was known to lead to blood-clotting problems. Once off that herb the blood problem went away.

Giving Suggestions

It is understandable that a person who wants to help a sick friend or relative might suggest something that he feels helped him or that he heard is effective. Sometimes it might even be a Christian kindness to do so, as when the apostle Paul advised young Timothy to avoid the local water but to 'use a little wine for the sake of his stomach and his frequent cases of sickness.'—1 Timothy 5:23.

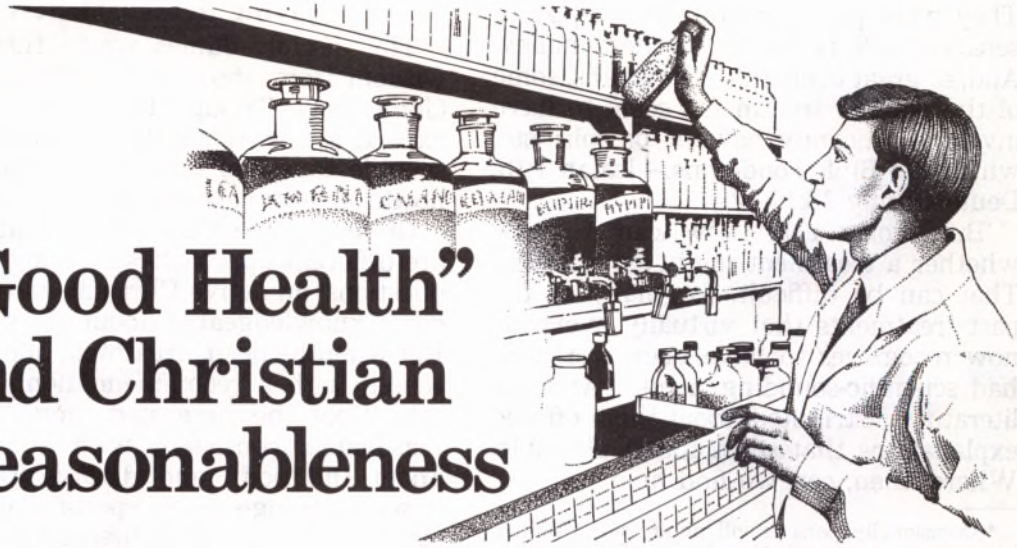
A person who regularly recommends drugs, vitamins, minerals or herbs should be careful, though, especially if he lacks a thorough knowledge of health and the body's organ systems. He ought to ask: Do I really have the facts? Though a drug, vitamin, mineral or herb apparently helped me, do I know whether it might harm someone else? If it did, might I be partially responsible and accountable? Or even if what I suggest is harmlessly ineffective, might I be the cause of a person's delaying effective treatment until his condition becomes critical or fatal? —Compare 1 Timothy 5:22.

Some have got unusually enthused about a health measure. As an extreme example, a Christian elder found under his door a letter from a friend who sold vitamins. In part it said: 'There is a logical and amazing reason why the (brand) supplements get results. It's just like "the truth" compared to "Babylon the Great." Sometimes I don't even know how some of our brothers and sisters got the truth. They ignore Proverbs 18:13 even though all our intentions are to help them.'

That some, for whatever reason, could develop almost a religious zeal about health matters underscores the need for all Christians to exercise care that they do not become unbalanced.

Other Questions

Christians can be thankful that we have the counsel of God's Word, for in various ways it helps us to keep healthy. Yet other aspects of health merit attention, such as: How can I determine what treatment to accept? What about unorthodox forms of diagnosis or therapy? Are there spiritual dangers with any of these? How should your view of God's kingdom affect your thinking on health? The next article will consider these aspects.



"Good Health" and Christian Reasonableness

THE apostle Paul wrote to Christians in ancient Philippi: "Let your reasonableness become known to all men." He thus encouraged them, and all Christians since, to manifest a spirit of moderation and intelligent balance.—Philippians 4:5.

We need reasonableness when it comes to our health. For example, we need to avoid overindulgence or extremes in what we eat, and we should get adequate exercise and rest. Our attitude toward treatments should likewise be based on reason, reflecting care that we do not get caught up emotionally in some health fad. Reasonableness is also needed in balancing our spiritual health and our physical health; we need to "make sure of the more important things" so that health concerns do not push God's kingdom into second place.—Philippians 1:10.

Selectivity as to Treatment

In deciding on medical or health matters, it is good to appreciate that even these matters can be influenced by popularity or fads. You may be able to recall treatments that once were popular but now are viewed quite differently. Do you remember when doctors used X rays for acne, removed children's tonsils for minor reasons or prescribed the new sulfa drugs or penicillin for almost any infection? Things have changed. Though these therapies might be appropriate in some cases, experience and research have revealed some undesirable side effects or indicated that they should be employed quite selectively.

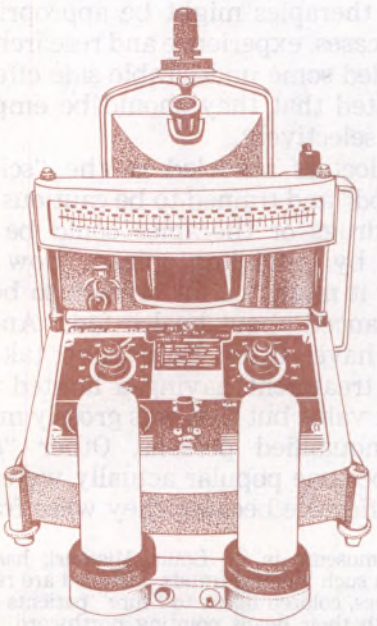
If doctors schooled in the "scientific method" and trained to be cautious about new drugs or therapies could be influenced by prevailing opinion, how much easier it might be for laymen to become unbalanced about health fads. And millions have. Often they have taken up some treatment having a limited therapeutic value but that was grossly misused by unqualified persons. Other "cures" that became popular actually were totally ineffective because they were frauds.*

* A museum in St. Louis, Missouri, has a display on such medical frauds. Included are radionics machines, colored lights to "cure" patients as they lay with their heads pointing northward, devices that supposedly transmit "cosmic energy" and others that involve diagnosis or testing based on mysterious "body forces."

They were promoted by men happy to separate sick people from their money. And, of great concern to Christians, some of the popular treatments seem to have involved 'uncanny powers' or spiritism, which the Bible condemns.—Isaiah 1:13; Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

'But,' some ask, 'how can I know whether a treatment might be a fraud?' That can be difficult, for many of the past treatments that virtually everyone now recognizes to have been worthless had scientific-sounding names. And the literature distributed about them offered explanations that some found plausible. Where, then, can we find help?*

* Occasionally, persons will inquire of the Watchtower Society as to whether a form of diagnosis or treatment involves fraud or spiritism. We are not in position to do research and judge the numerous "treatments" used earth wide. But we trust that the counsel in these two articles will help readers to apply Bible principles and reasonableness in deciding on health measures.



MICRO-DYNAMETER: Claimed 'to diagnose almost any known ailment'

Applying Reasonableness

The disciple James wrote that "the wisdom from above is . . . reasonable." (James 3:17) Though he is not a health expert, a Christian's striving to be reasonable can help him to evaluate diagnostic (or testing) methods and therapies.

Of course, we must realize that there are different approaches to many health questions; an active Christian cannot become knowledgeable about all of them. But when he needs treatment and is presented with a recommendation, he can ask: 'Does the suggested therapy seem reasonable, consistent with knowledge about the body and disease? Or does it seem strange, even spectacular in its claims? Am I being influenced to accept this treatment by uninformed persons or those who stand to benefit financially? If I have doubts about it, should I wait until more facts are known?'

These questions may sound elementary, but the fact that some bizarre treatments became popular in the past shows the value of considering the questions. This also might be illustrated by a recent experience: A woman, with a normal education and employed in an office, went to a practitioner who stressed an extreme dietary treatment. She later told friends that she had been shown "bottles of tumors that patients had passed," including a "brain tumor." Reasonableness could move you to think: Does the average person know what a real tumor looks like, and so how could he identify a true tumor regardless of how it supposedly was "passed"? Also, since the brain is enclosed, how could someone "pass" a brain tumor through the intestinal tract or in any other way?

Finally, many of the past tests or treatments that proved worthless were promoted with claims about "miracle substances," unusual "body forces" or strange methods by which a practitioner

took 'readings,' perhaps from a pendulum or from a body part that did not seem related to what was being diagnosed. The appeal was to emotion, mystery or even to spiritistic forces, not to reasonableness.—Compare Leviticus 19:26.

What About Testimonials?

We are further aided by this: "Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps." —Proverbs 14:15.

That is good counsel, for most of us have heard of treatments that were recommended with testimonials such as, 'Doctors told Mr. Jones that he had four months to live, but he took —— and now he is fine.' Whether "Mr. Jones" actually had the disease or not, you may know that many past health frauds were endorsed with testimonials. This certainly does not mean that we need be critical if an acquaintance relates a personal experience. However, in making major health decisions we ought to do more than 'put faith in every word of testimonials.'

For example, even *if* "Mr. Jones" had a disease and did improve, *why* did he? A strong influence in health treatments, including conventional medicine, is the "placebo effect." Studies have shown that approximately 30 to 40 percent of patients improved after treatment with inert pills or water injections. *Science Digest* (September, 1981) reports: "Faith, hope, trust, all important components of the placebo effect, can at times heal wounds, alter body chemistry, even change the course of the most relentless diseases." Hence, when deciding how much 'faith to put in every word,' remember the "placebo effect" and ask, Has the treatment itself been established as effective by sound research and extensive testing?

Swiss "Abbe" Mermet used a pendulum to diagnose sickness and locate missing persons

Even if a report goes beyond a mere testimonial, it is good to consider whether the therapy is morally or religiously acceptable. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* reported on a 28-year-old woman who developed lupus erythematosus, a serious immunological disease that can be identified by numerous clinical tests. Declining medication, she went to a witch doctor who "removed the curse placed on her." She returned free of symptoms, evidently cured. The *JAMA* report posed the question of how an Asian witch doctor could 'remove an evil spirit' and cure her. The treatment apparently was effective, but Christians would avoid it or other treatments that they feel might involve some form of spiritism.—Compare Matthew 7:22, 23.

Seek Qualified Help

It is obvious that in many cases we need expert advice about treatments and health questions. On whom can we rely? The Scriptures offer this wise observation: "Have you beheld a man skillful in his work? Before kings is where he will station himself."—Proverbs 22:29.

A man who studies a matter and develops skill becomes recognized as qualified, even an expert in his field. This is so, too, in the field of health. Thus when evaluating a recommendation from a doctor or health adviser, you might ask yourself: What are his credentials? The answer may not depend solely on his titles or the abbreviations after his name. Many persons have assumed titles to ap-

Live to Be 100?

An investigation by the Committee for an Extended Lifespan surveyed 1,000 persons who had lived to be 100 years of age. What things did many of them have in common? A newspaper summarized it this way:

"Don't ever binge on anything. Get up early. Lead a spiritual life. Keep busy. Be self-sufficient."

Other things commonly noted: Usually they went to bed early. Few were fat. Most kept active, not being dreamers.

pear important. (Compare Matthew 23: 6, 7.) Some who like to be called "doctor" may diagnose or treat (free or for money*) though they have merely read a few books or attended some hours of "classes."

You might also consider: What is the extent and quality of his training? Is he respected by knowledgeable persons, viewed as qualified? The disciple Luke evidently had studied and gained sufficient experience so that when the apostle Paul referred to him as "Luke the beloved *physician*" his qualifications were respected.—Colossians 4:14.

Of course, even some persons well trained in health matters have given bad advice or treatment. Why? Sometimes because of not having genuine interest in their patients. They may have developed some peculiar health theory. Or they have not kept up to date medically and so lack the specialized knowledge necessary. Here, too, the Bible can aid us.

It says: "There is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential talk, but in the multitude of counselors there is accomplishment." (Proverbs 15:22) This underscores the value of getting a second or third opinion. Many patients build up confidence in their doctor and so do not need another opinion on every recommendation he makes. But it is reasonable to get a second opinion on serious issues or when you are not comfortable about advice received. Be sure, however, to obtain the opinion from someone who you are confident will give you unbiased advice. Even if it is from someone who might have a different approach to the problem, it should be *expert* advice. Thus the "multitude of counselors" will aid you toward better health.

* In many lands it is a criminal offense to practice medicine without a license.—Matthew 22:21.

Balancing Spiritual Health and Physical Health

With all this discussion of health and treatment, devoted Christians ought to keep this in mind: Important as our physical health is, our spiritual health is much more important!

Jesus counseled: "Quit being anxious about your souls as to what you will eat or about your bodies as to what you will wear." Yes, we need to guard against becoming overly anxious about feeding, clothing or even medicating our bodies. How sad it would be if a Christian became so concerned with his physical health that he neglected his spiritual health! He could fall into the trap of the rich man in Jesus' illustration, to whom God said: "This night they are demanding your soul from you. Who, then, is to have the things [including health] you stored up?" Jesus added: "So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God."—Luke 12:20-22.

True, we want to care for our health so that we can use our lives serving God. But reports from various areas indicate that some Christians have become preoccupied with physical health. As just one indication, a Witness in the Midwestern United States wrote: "So many seem so overly concerned with health. It is con-

stantly on their minds [as reflected by their conversation]." The letter explained that many seem to have become excessively concerned about this after being told they had cancer by persons who are amateurs but who feel they can read whether someone has cancer and who then prescribe diets and food supplements. The Witness heard a visitor from California say: "We [with these health habits] do not associate with those in our congregation who choose to remain ignorant and go to their doctors."

This is damaging from a number of standpoints. Christian meetings and conventions are not occasions for engrossed conversation about health, nor for attempting to diagnose others or promoting treatments. Rather, these gatherings are for warm, spiritual fellowship. Elders should watch that the Kingdom Hall does not become a center for propagandizing various health treatments or views, but remains a place of unity and true worship.—Compare John 2:16, 17.

Perfect health is impossible in the present system of things. Such health will not be possible until the new system of things arrives. Then "no resident will say: 'I am sick.' " And that will be because of their error and sin being pardoned. (Isaiah 33:24) So let us not be unreasonably concerned about our present health, as if pursuing physical perfection now. Rather, let us manifest wisdom and reasonableness by concentrating on our spiritual health.

Jesus indicated where we should focus our attention: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) We must not let ourselves be deflected from this divine assignment; health issues must not sidetrack us from wholeheartedly supporting the Kingdom. 'Seeking first the Kingdom' is the wise and reasonable course. It will bring the "peace of God" and thus may even improve our present health. But, more importantly, it will result in the treasure of God's approval, with all the marvelous prospects that will become realities only when Christ's ransom sacrifice is applied to mankind.—Philippians 3:8-11; 4:6, 7; Matthew 6:33.

A Pervasive Concern About Health

In a recent best-selling book, Dr. Lewis Thomas, president of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, observed:

"As a people, we have become obsessed with Health. There is something fundamentally, radically unhealthy about all this. We do not seem to be seeking more exuberance in living as much as staving off failure, putting off dying. We have lost all confidence in the human body. The new consensus is that we are badly designed, intrinsically fallible, vulnerable to a host of hostile influences inside and around us, and only precariously alive. We live in danger of falling apart at any moment . . .

"The trouble is, we are being taken in by the propaganda . . . We are, in real life, a reasonably healthy people. Far from being ineptly put together, we are amazingly tough, durable organisms, full of health, ready for most contingencies. The new danger to our well-being, if we continue to listen to all the talk, is in becoming a nation of healthy hypochondriacs, living gingerly, worrying ourselves half to death.

"And we do not have time for this sort of thing anymore, nor can we afford such a distraction from our other, considerably more urgent problems. Indeed, we should be worrying that our preoccupation with personal health may be a symptom of copping out, . . . while just outside, the whole of society is coming undone."
—*The Medusa and the Snail* (1979), pp. 36-40.

Insight on the News

'Religion a Threat to Life'

"Should it not be realized," writes C. L. Sulzberger in the *International Herald Tribune,* "that in addition to other causes—imperialism, racism, militarism—religion has developed into a persistently greater threat to human life?" Pointing to the armed conflicts in the Middle East, Northern Ireland and Vietnam, he continues: "Religion is sacred and therefore but gingerly touched upon in political discussion. But mankind can never forget the Nazi Holocaust, the Spanish Inquisition, the sectarian Buddhist wars, the Crusades and the Thirty Years' Catholic-Protestant war of the 17th century, whose last battles continue today in Ulster." Noting the close ties between religion and politics in many lands that allow for much bloodshed, Sulzberger adds: "Various godless Communist and Socialist parties have shown themselves less bitterly quarrelsome in their sectarianism."

The problem lies, not with true religion, but with those of whom God says "[they] honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far removed from me." (Mark 7:6) Rather than allowing religious differences to cause one wantonly to slay others, the Bible's advice is to "pursue peace with all people."—Hebrews 12:14.

What should one do when deliberately provoked? "Return evil for evil to no one. . . . If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men," advises God's Word. And rather than retaliating by taking matters into one's own hands, it continues, "do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.' " (Romans 12:17-19) True Christians, then, look to God through his kingdom to right all injustices, confident in his power to do so. No 'threat to life,' theirs is a stand of strict neutrality in worldly conflicts.

"Sloppy Agape"

"What has gone wrong?" asks John A. Howard, president of *The Rockford Institute,* when discussing the alarming increase in crime. "When I tell my children that while I was growing up, we didn't lock the front door day or night, nor did we lock the car when we parked in Chicago, and we didn't need to, they find it hard to picture such a time. The change in just one generation is awesome." Citing the failure of religion as a major cause for the drastic increase in crime, he continues: "The churches and synagogues . . . used to help the young understand that there is a difference between right and wrong. . . . But many of the clergy seem to have backed away from the Ten Commandments and preach from the pulpit what a friend calls 'sloppy agape [Greek word for love, rhymes with sloppy],' an undefined sort of general good will, with all the sharp corners of specific requirements and sacrifices rounded off to fit just about everyone."

That this has happened should not come as a surprise, for the Bible foretold that there would come the time "when they will not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled; and they will turn their ears away from the truth." —2 Timothy 4:3, 4.

Not Murder?

"The man who stabbed a pregnant 29-year-old woman—killing her unborn baby—will not be charged with murder when he is arrested," states the *New York Post.* Why not? Because "state law—designed to protect doctors who perform abortions from being charged with murder—says that the death of a fetus younger than 6 months old is not a homicide, even if its vital organs and limbs are fully formed," answers the *Post.* And so her assailant, who ignored her pleas not to hurt her since she was pregnant, will be charged only with the rape and stabbing of the mother.

How far, indeed, men's laws have strayed from God's law! The Bible stated that if a man caused a "fatal accident" to occur to the fetus of a woman, "then you must give soul for soul." God's Word assures us that shortly now true justice will be carried out, and there will be a proper regard for *all* human life when His will takes place on earth.—Exodus 21:22, 23; Matthew 6:10.

Questions from Readers

■ **Would it be wrong for a Christian, under medical treatment, to allow leeches to be applied to him to draw off some blood?**

It would not be contrary to God's Word to permit the medical withdrawal and disposal of some blood. But to do this through the use of leeches would conflict with what the Bible says. Admittedly, leeches are not commonly used today. Yet questions about using them do arise, particularly in Europe. Noting what the Bible says about blood can help us to evaluate such treatments.

For centuries it was thought that many ills could be relieved by bloodletting, or bleeding. Medieval barber-surgeons practiced this art, a carry-over being the red-and-white–striped pole that in some places identifies a barbershop. But medical doctors practiced bloodletting too. In 1799 repeated bleedings likely hastened the death of George Washington, the first president of the United States of America. Even when it did not kill a person, the practice of bloodletting brought many patients to an anemic state.

In Europe it was common to accomplish a form of bloodletting by applying a quantity of leeches to the skin, allowing them to fill up on the patient's blood. Reporting from Mainz, Germany, Dr. L. K. Altman wrote: "In 1850, when patients might apply as many as 80 leeches at the same time for a wide variety of ailments, about 100 million leeches were sold in France. As late as 1953, Russian doctors used leeches on Stalin before he died." —New York *Times,* February 17, 1981.

Dr. Altman pointed out that even in modern medicine some doctors in Europe and in the United States use leeches in specialized situations. For example, they have been employed to remove blood clots in certain cases of plastic surgery or to draw off accumulated blood from fingers restored by microsurgery.

Where do Christians stand as to the removing of blood, and would it be fitting to allow this to be done with leeches?

After the flood of Noah's day, God set out a change from the vegetarian diet that he had outlined for animals and humans in the garden of Eden. Jehovah said: "Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you. As in the case of green vegetation, I do give it all to you. Only flesh with its soul—its blood—you must not eat." (Genesis 9:3, 4; 1:30) God explained the matter further in the Mosaic law. He said that blood represents life, a gift from God, and it is sacred. What, then, was to be done with the blood of an animal that was killed for sacrifice? The blood was not to be used for fertilizer, animal food or some such thing. It was to be poured out and covered with dust; in a sense it was given back to Him.—Leviticus 17:10-14.

Christians should strive to manifest that they appreciate the sacredness of blood. (Acts 15:28, 29) Accordingly, if blood is removed from the body, it should be disposed of, comparable to the Israelites' pouring blood out on the ground.

At times doctors may have medical grounds for advising that blood be removed (phlebotomy). For example, with the blood disease polycythemia vera a person has excessive red blood cells (the opposite of anemia). The blood, thick with red cells, may produce clots, increasing the threat of strokes or heart attacks. There are various ways of managing this, but sometimes the choice treatment is venesection, drawing off some blood from a vein. The counsel of God's Word would not rule this out so long as the removed blood was disposed of. Similarly, many Christians have felt conscientiously able to permit small quantities of blood to be taken for medical tests, realizing that once the tests were completed the blood would be discarded.

However, though leeches parasitically feed on blood in their natural state at present, it would not be proper for a Christian to permit leeches to draw his blood. (Proverbs 30:15) Even where this was urged for medical reasons and the leeches would later be disposed of, the use of leeches would involve deliberately feeding blood to these creatures. That would conflict with the Bible's indication that blood, being sacred and representing life, should be disposed of if it is removed from a body.

It Can Change Your Life

There is a book that has actually changed the lives of many young persons. One day a girl took this book to school to read during her free periods. One of her classmates came along, snatched it out of her hand and in a mocking tone said: "What is this that you are reading?" She briefly explained the contents of the book ***Your Youth —Getting the Best out of It.*** She drew his attention to the chapter: "Your Clothes and Appearance Talk —About *You*." He laughed and left, but took the book with him. The following week they met again in the lecture class but his appearance had changed drastically. His long hair was cut and his beard was shaved off. His attendance in school improved 100 percent. The other classmates, noting this striking change in the young fellow, asked the Witness about the book that was responsible. As a result she placed five additional books with them.