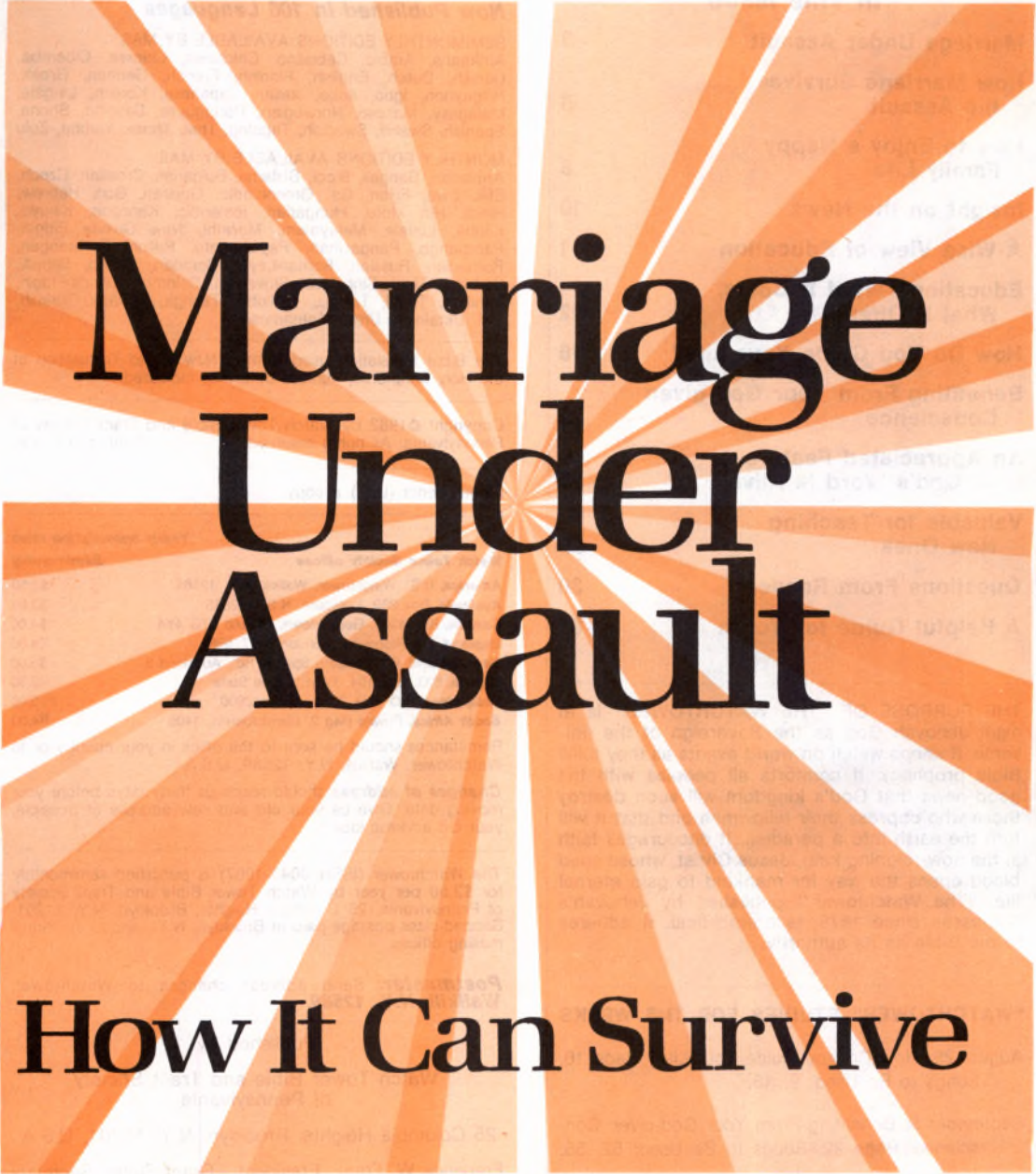


July 15, 1982



The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



Marriage Under Assault

How It Can Survive

The Watchtower[®]

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

July 15, 1982
Vol. 103, No. 14

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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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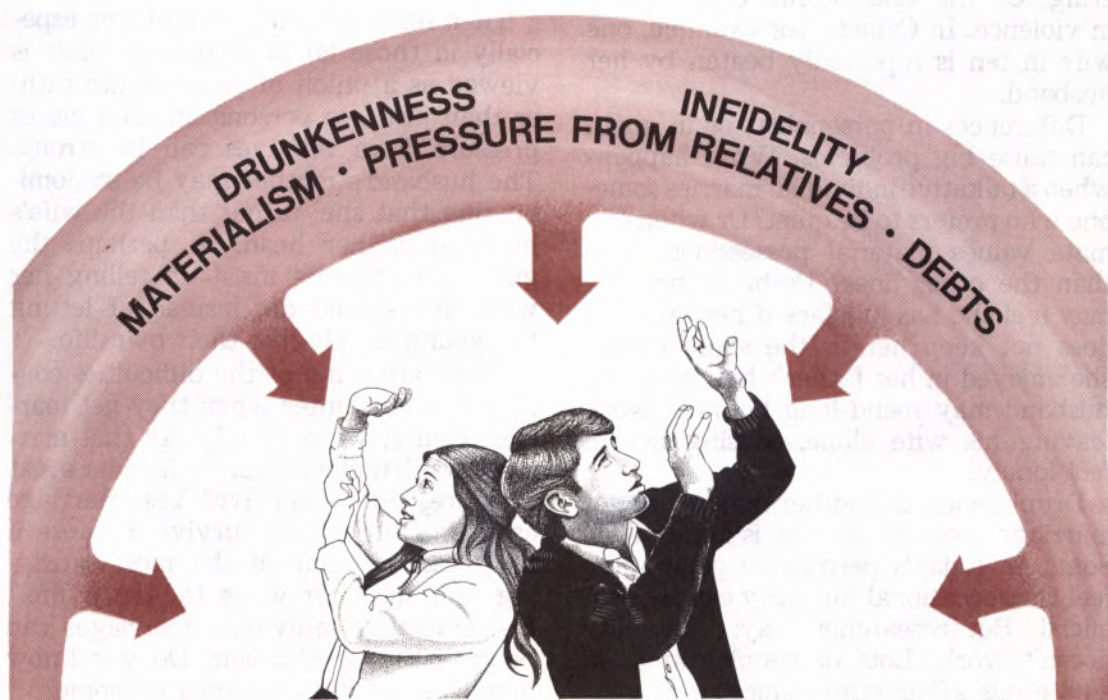
Frederick W. Franz, President Grant Suiter, Secretary

Marriage Under Assault

THERE is good news and bad news about marriage in today's world. The good news comes from Toronto psychiatrist Dr. Alan Lyall. He told a reporter for the *Toronto Star* that, in spite of suffering many assaults in recent years, marriage is making a comeback. Why should that be? He answers: "It really can be one of the most satisfying and fulfilling ways to live a life."

The bad news, however, is that many marriages are very unhappy. A young woman columnist, arguing against the very idea of marriage, said: "When I look at marriages, mostly what I see is pain. And the thing about having pain is that it feels so good when you stop." Do you feel marriage is a satisfying way to live a life or merely a source of pain?

The pain and suffering in some mar-



riages cannot be denied. They are seen in the high divorce rate in lands where divorce is permitted. In the United States the divorce rate tripled in the last twenty years. In the Soviet Union one marriage in three is said to end in divorce. In Australia the divorce rate quadrupled in just one year when a new divorce law was introduced. According to the *Financial Times* of London, the rising divorce rate in England cost nearly two billion dollars a year (one billion pounds) in welfare payments to divorcées and children.

Why so much turmoil in marriage?

No One Is Perfect

One difficulty is that no one is perfect. We all have quirks that can irritate others. When we see individuals only occasionally, those quirks are not important. But when we live with an individual in marriage, they can loom very large indeed. They can result in destructive bickering. Or the relationship can explode in violence. In Canada, for example, one wife in ten is reportedly beaten by her husband.

Differences in personality, or in goals, can cause big problems. What happens when a talkative individual marries someone who prefers to be quiet? Or when one mate values material possessions more than the other does? Perhaps the wife may feel she has lost face if her husband does not keep her in the same luxury she enjoyed in her father's house. Or the husband may spend long hours at work leaving his wife alone, causing her to feel lonely.

Drunkenness is another major cause of marriage breakup. And so is immorality. Some, in today's permissive generation, feel that occasional infidelity can be beneficial. But researchers say: "Infidelity doesn't work. Lots of people think an adulterous affair might spice up a mar-

riage, but an affair was always a sign of real problems. It was never a painless thing." Bearing this out, a report from England showed adultery to be one of the most prevalent grounds for divorce there. Truly, an adulterer "is bringing his own soul to ruin."—Proverbs 6:32.

Did you ever consider, too, the way the deteriorating economy can erode a marriage? When both husband and wife go out to work—as so many do today—a family tends to drift apart. And when a couple gets deeply into debt, tension, bitterness and recriminations often result.

Again, the modern tendency of people to 'do their own thing' works against the stability of marriage. Couples find it difficult to adjust to each other's likes and dislikes. Often they expect the same freedom in marriage that they had while single. Married people who cannot cultivate a giving attitude have a serious problem.

Then relatives can be a problem, especially in those lands where marriage is viewed as a union of two families rather than just two persons. In such places pressure from relatives can be strong. The husband's mother may be so domineering that she, rather than the wife's husband, is her head. Or perhaps the girl's own parents insist on telling her what she should do, instead of letting the young couple live their own life.

These are some of the difficulties couples may encounter when they get married. Hence, we can truly say that marriage is still under assault, still under great pressure. Will it survive? Yes, marriage as an institution will survive, because it truly can be "one of the most satisfying and fulfilling ways to live a life." But evidently individual marriages can be casualties in the war. Do you know how to avoid this unhappy outcome?

How Marriage Survives the Assault



A MARRIED woman once said: "There are not many things in life to equal the happiness of a successful marriage. And there are not many things worse than an unhappy marriage." This makes marriage sound like a gamble for high stakes. A couple can either win a lifetime's happiness or experience much misery.

However, marriage does not have to be a gamble. In some ways it is like traveling through an area you have never visited before. If you set out with

only a vague idea of how to reach your destination, you are certainly taking a risk. But you can reduce the risk considerably if you consult someone who has successfully made the journey before you. And there are many successful marriages around today. What can we learn from them?

Experienced Guides

A study was made in Canada of a number of couples who had been married for fifteen years or more. Professor Schlesinger of the University of Toronto asked what some of the things were that contributed to the success of their marriages. His research highlighted the importance of four qualities: love, respect, trust and communication.

A couple who had been happily married for seventy years was interviewed by a newspaper. What was the secret of their success? They mentioned trust, trying not to argue, showing affection to each other, and having a common goal of helping other people.

These ideas may sound old-fashioned, but they worked. If you know people who have been successfully married for a number of years, why not ask them what their secret is? Likely they will say similar things.

However, you may feel that what works for another person would not work for you. Your background, personality or problems are in some way different. On a journey through unknown territory, the ideal thing would be to have a guidebook that warns against *all* possible hazards

so that you could plan your trip in such a way as to avoid problems that would be particularly difficult for you. Is there a guidebook like this for marriage? Yes, there is. And no one should embark on the journey of matrimony without consulting it.

The Needed Guidebook

Not too long ago a young man named Alex discovered this guidebook. Alex had a background of delinquency, heavy drinking and drug abuse. Additionally, he was a disillusioned Vietnam veteran. He had a young wife and a new baby, but his marriage was traversing rocky terrain. One morning, after he had hosted an all-night drinking party for some ex-army buddies at his home, his wife said: "You are neglecting me. You forget I am even around!"

Happily, Alex and his wife consulted the guidebook. Soon after, he reported: "We have lost most of our old friends, but we are happy . . . especially as man and wife. I can't express the beauty—it's a feeling beyond words. . . . Our personalities have changed and our family looks at us with admiration."

What was the guidebook that showed Alex and his wife the way from matrimonial discord to a happy marriage? It was the Bible. This book, though ancient, gives more wise, effective counsel on happy marriages than any other source available today. Consider some of its sayings.

Words of Wisdom

Nobody is perfect. A married couple have to learn to live with each other's weaknesses. Hence, the Bible says: "Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against

another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also. But, besides all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union."—Colossians 3:12-14.

Would not any marriage succeed if the husband and wife followed this advice? They would certainly surmount many of the problems of day-to-day living. Why, even newlyweds that were strangers to each other would be on their way to a happy marriage if they had developed these qualities.

Reports tell of husbands who are thoughtless, selfish or even cruel. Yet the Bible counsels: "Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation . . . Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies." (Ephesians 5:25, 28) A husband who is concerned for his wife's welfare and makes sacrifices for her will likely see his marriage succeed.

Some husbands complain of constant bickering and nagging. Yet the Bible says: "The wife should have deep respect for her husband." (Ephesians 5:33) A wife who follows this counsel is making a big contribution to her own happiness.

Those two marriage breakers, drunkenness and immorality, are roundly condemned in the Bible. "Neither fornicators, . . . nor adulterers, . . . nor drunkards . . . will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers."—Hebrews 13:4.

What about when the family interferes? The Bible shows that a young couple should respect their parents. Nevertheless, a man's *first* obligation is to his wife. Jesus said: "'A man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh' . . . Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart." (Matthew

19:5, 6) A young couple should gladly accept advice from their parents. But they should not allow them to run their lives.

Guidance That Works

Some may view this advice as old-fashioned in today's world. But how is the world's record in the field of marriage? Very poor. However, did you read carefully what was said by those who *had* made a success of their marriages? They credited their happiness to qualities that—whether they knew it or not—are recommended in the Scriptures. Can you argue with success?

If we cultivate the giving attitude the Bible recommends, will we lose out somehow? No. Giving is really a basic part of marriage. All who get married sacrifice something, but, when their marriage is successful, they get back a hundredfold in happiness. Why? Because, "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

'That is fine in theory,' you may say. 'But surely no marriage works out like that in practice.' The answer is that there are many, many marriages today that are happy because the couples strive to follow this Bible counsel. Even where serious problems exist—as they did in the case of Alex and his wife—the Scriptures show what to aim for. If a couple works together for that goal, happy results quickly follow.

What, though, if only one of the marriage mates tries to apply these principles? Well, the problem becomes harder, but not hopeless. It is better that 50 percent of a partnership does things right than that both do things wrong. And, with endurance, good results are still possible.

A husband in Korea used to beat his wife when he was under the influence of alcohol. His wife did not seek to end the relationship, even though life was

difficult. To her, the goal of a happy marriage was worth aiming for. Hence, unilaterally, she followed the Bible's counsel, particularly its advice to wives that they cultivate "the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God."—1 Peter 3:4.

For eleven years she endured. Was it worth it? Yes, because eventually her husband was moved to look into the guidebook for himself. Why? If you asked him, he would answer that his wife's "quiet and mild spirit" moved him to find out the secret of her fine conduct. He saw the wisdom of the Bible's advice and changed his ways.

Marriage truly can be "one of the most satisfying and fulfilling ways to live a life." Perhaps this should not surprise us, because the one who gave us life, Jehovah God, is the same One that gave us marriage. (Psalm 36:9; Genesis 2:18-24) And he is the One who provided a guidebook, the Bible, to help us to make a success of our marriage.

Today the institution of marriage is under assault because of the pressures of the world in which we live. But, since marriage is from God, it is surviving the assault. And if you follow God's counsel recorded in the Bible, *your* marriage will survive, and you, too, will find it a most satisfying way to live a life.

In Our Next Issue

- **Too Old to Learn?—"Never!"**
- **Work That Refreshes**
- **"Keep Working Out Your Own Salvation"**
- **Moneylending and Christian Love**

God's Word Is Alive

How to Enjoy a Happy Family Life

DID you realize that God's Word can help you to enjoy a happy family life? If the counsel it provides to family members is applied, the benefits will be great. Are you a husband? If so, consider what God's Word says to you.

BE FAITHFUL TO YOUR WIFE

"Husbands, love your wives," the Bible urges. "Be happy with your wife and find your joy with the girl you married. . . . Why should you give your love to another woman? Why should you prefer the charms of another man's wife?"—Ephesians 5:25, 28; Proverbs 5:18-20, *Today's English Version*.

If a husband will heed such Bible counsel, it will contribute to family happiness. Also, his wife will be encouraged to apply Bible counsel as well. What are wives urged to do?



RESPECT YOUR HUSBAND

"The wife should have deep respect for her husband," God's Word says. (Ephesians 5:33) The failure of wives to heed this counsel is a chief cause for some husbands' resenting their wives. A wife shows respect by supporting her husband's decisions and cooperating whole-souled with him. By fulfilling her Bible-assigned role as 'helper and complement' to her husband, she makes it easy for her husband to love her.—Genesis 2:18.

God's Word Is Alive

When children are born into a family, how are they to be reared? What counsel does God's Word give parents?

PROVIDE CHILDREN TIME AND DISCIPLINE

As parents, you need to give of yourself to your children, spending quality time with them and providing them with wholesome instruction from God's Word. (Deuteronomy 11:19) Part of the instruction should take the form of correction. "Foolishness is tied up with the heart of a boy," the Bible explains, but "the rod of discipline is what will remove it far from him." The giving of discipline, even if it includes a spanking, is an evidence of parental love, as the Bible says: "The one loving [his son] is he that does look for him with discipline."—Proverbs 22:15; 13:24; 23:13, 14; Ephesians 6:4.



How children behave also has much to do with whether a family is happy or not. What does God's Word urge them to do?



OBEY YOUR PARENTS

The Bible says: "Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do." How serious is this? The Bible proverb indicates, by saying: "Anyone who makes fun of his father or despises his mother in her old age ought to be eaten by vultures or have his eyes picked out by wild ravens." As you can see, to obey and respect your parents is a very serious matter to God.—Ephesians 6:1; Proverbs 30:17; *TEV*.

Do you really want to enjoy a happy family life? You can. It is no secret how it is achieved. The Creator of the family provided a recipe, or guide, for making a success of family living. If each member of the family will learn and apply God's counsel, this is certain to contribute to family happiness.

Insight on the News

"Faint Out of Fear"

One in three Toronto residents under the age of thirty-five believes there will be a nuclear war in his lifetime and 74 percent of all surveyed do not expect to survive such a war, according to a Gallup poll taken for Canada's *Toronto Star*. Commenting on the psychological effect that fear of nuclear war has on society, one twenty-seven-year-old stated: "They're paralysed by anxiety.

It's the terrible insecurity of not knowing if it will happen and the paranoia and fear of knowing you can't control any of it."

"The biggest and most tragic effect is that so many people live as though we didn't have a future," said one woman in the report. "The whole philosophy of living for the moment, living selfishly for today, is fuelled by this sometimes unconscious realization that we can no longer assume the human race will be around next generation. People

have always assumed they'd have a future; now they're not so sure and they're getting angry."

The fact that people would "become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth" was foreseen by Jesus Christ. Would Christians also share this paralyzing fear of the future? Jesus said: "But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." —Luke 21:25-28.

Annual Meeting October 2, 1982

This year the annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Norval, Ontario, Canada, on Saturday, October 2, 1982. The assembly hall is located approximately six miles from the Canada branch, which is in Georgetown.

The Canada branch advises that it has not been able to secure a large facility for the annual meeting and that the available seating at the assembly hall is comparatively limited. For this reason the branch has arranged that admission to the annual meeting will be by invitation only and is giving priority to the membership of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania and their immediate families, as well as a good cross section of representatives from all across Canada. The Canada branch advises that those members who are planning to attend may correspond directly with the branch office in respect to rooming accommodations in neighboring hotels and motels, as well as some accommodations in the homes of brothers in the area. Members can write to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Box 4100, Georgetown, Ontario, Canada L7G 4Y4. Each member who is going to attend the annual meeting in person should promptly write to the branch, informing

them as to how many family members will accompany him. The branch asks that all this information be received from the members who are going to attend the annual meeting in person not later than August 15, 1982; so please write the branch immediately, giving all information.

The regular letters of notice of the annual meeting, together with the proxies, will be sent to the members earlier than usual this year so that we can receive them back from the members not later than August 15, 1982. As each member knows, he should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, as it will be relied upon in determining in advance those who will actually be personally present. The Secretary's office does not need information regarding members of the family that will accompany the member.

So all members will need to return their proxies promptly after receipt, and, additionally, those members who are going to attend the annual meeting in Canada will need to write also to the Canada branch, giving the necessary information, so that this reaches the branch not later than the 15th of August 1982.

A Wise View of Education

THE Bible advises parents to bring their children up in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) Such training is far more valuable than secular education.

A Nigerian father agrees with this. He says: "I regularly discussed spiritual things, including the daily text, with my children. I wanted to help them to love Jehovah and obey his counsel. I also wanted to give them a strong faith.

"I knew of the unchristian influences they faced at school. So I did not enroll them in boarding schools. I wanted them to come home each day so that I could continue to train them according to the Scriptures. I remember that, after school one day, my daughter told me that a wealthy man had invited her to visit him. I went to see him and found that he had immoral intentions toward her. I was glad she was not at boarding school, where she would have been out of reach of my guidance.

"I also set pioneering [full-time preaching] as a goal for the children, and three of them enrolled as pioneers as soon as they left school. When Michael was in school, he expressed a desire to be a pharmacist like me. I told him he had his mind on a good profession, but that, if he attended university, he would risk becoming absorbed into the worldly system. You see, I had observed that many university graduates had developed undesirable traits. Some of them had become proud and lost appreciation for God and his service.

"Evidently Michael thought seriously about these things because, a few years later, he turned down opportunities to

attend university and, instead, enrolled as a pioneer. He and his wife, Eunice, who also started pioneering as soon as she left school, are now serving at Bethel [the Watchtower Society's branch office] in Lagos."

Young Christian, too, was taught the truth by his parents and was strongly influenced by his mother's parents who were pioneers. On leaving high school, he himself pioneered for several months and expressed a desire to make this his life's career.

However, his father thought that it was important for him to acquire a university education to ensure a secure future. So he insisted that Christian enroll in a five-year university course.

What would Christian do? Well, his conscience led him to obey his father, as the Bible commands. (Ephesians 6: 1) But he took steps to guard his spirituality while at the university. In fact, finding that his course was not too time-consuming, he enrolled as a pioneer.

His father was opposed to this at first, but eventually relented. Christian summed up his feelings when he said to his father: "I deeply appreciate all you have done for me and I want to obey you. This is why I agreed to attend university, and I intend to fulfill that agreement. However, I am also dedicated to Jehovah, which means I must put his interests first. I believe that pioneering is one of the best ways to do this." —Matthew 6:33; Ecclesiastes 12:1.

In both of the above instances, the young people were blessed. But how should Christians in general view education? Read our next article.



Education —What It Costs, What It Offers

WOULD you like your children to have a good education? 'Of course,' you say. 'A good education equips a person for a better life. An educated person has many advantages over someone who has little education.' This is true. Christian parents, as well as others, want their children to get the best education possible.

But what does the "best education possible" include? A Christian knows that it includes both secular and spiritual learning. Spiritual education continues through our lives, but how far should formal secular education go? Should a Christian youth be satisfied with a basic secular education? Or should he attend a college or university? This is not an easy question to answer because, while all education offers benefits, it also costs something. In what way?

A Basic Education

Education begins before a child goes to school. A wise Christian parent trains a child right from infancy. What should he be trained in? The apostle Paul reminded Timothy that he had been trained "from infancy" to know the "holy writings," the portion of the Bible that existed then. (2 Timothy 3:15) Hence, parents can teach their children about Jehovah God, Jesus

Christ, the importance of God's kingdom, and other Scriptural truths, while the children are still young.

If a young child is able to learn these things, then obviously he can also start to learn reading and writing, and wise parents take time to teach these too. Thus, the education of a child should start early.

Does this cost anything? It costs very little money, but it costs more time and energy. However, it is well worth it. With such early education, a child can develop heartfelt love for Jehovah and quickly develop basic learning skills.

In most lands the state provides a basic secular education for children when they get to be about six years old. Even though this education is paid for largely with tax money, there may well be another cost involved. Influences that parents cannot control begin to mold the child's thinking. For the first time in his life, the youngster is separated from his parents for several hours a day. He may mix with children who have not been taught truly Christian ways, and, hence, his parents have to be sure that he does not forget his early training.

Is it worth the cost? Most parents think so. In the schools, children get a broad education in many fields of knowledge.

Are the possible benefits of a university education worth the price that might be paid?

They may also start to learn skills that will be valuable throughout life. And, though living at home, they have opportunity to demonstrate their love for Jehovah away from the watchful eyes of their parents.

There is, however, a price that wise Christian parents are not willing to pay. They do not pressure their children to study so hard that they have little or no energy or time left to study the "holy writings" or to serve God. Why not? Because, while the secular education has a certain value, only education based on the "holy writings" can make a person "wise for salvation." (2 Timothy 3:15) Which is more important: a secular education that equips one for a few years of life? or an education that prepares one for eternal life?

Colleges and Universities

In many lands, after primary schooling young folk normally continue into secondary education. At this point many Christian parents, remembering how Jesus was trained to be a carpenter, encourage their children to obtain some kind of vocational training. (Mark 6:3) They know that when the youngsters grow up, they will have responsibilities, and now is a good time to start equipping them to handle these.—1 Timothy 5:4, 8.

Some wonder whether they should direct their children toward a university education. Why? In a poor country, a university education may seem the best way to get ahead. It may appear to offer financial security, and even more. A Nigerian educator said: "Fathers . . . want their children to become medical doc-

tors, engineers, architects, accountants in order to raise the social status of their families."

However, are these the things a Christian parent should put first when planning the education of his child? Many parents think not. They prefer to explore alternative ways to prepare their children for life. Why? Because the benefits of a university education are often not worth the cost.

The Cost

The *Nigeria Daily Times* referred to the financial cost: "Communities have taxed . . . themselves heavily; parents have forgone luxurious and sometimes badly needed items, while gainfully employed youths have put in substantial parts of their earnings, all in a bid to ensure that their children, wards and themselves partake of the fruits of higher education."

Would it be wise for Christian parents to make such sacrifices to send their children to a university? Perhaps you can afford the financial cost. Is there another price that has to be considered? Often, yes. For example, one young man's parents allowed him to travel to Europe to attend university. Did his attendance there lead to his having financial security, or raise the status of his family back at home? No. At the urging of his new "friends" at the university, he took drugs and died of an overdose. Another young African went to a university in the United States. He was brought home with suspected brain damage, from drugs and alcohol. What a price the parents of these young men paid!

Parents, what do you hope your children will do with their lives?

Other Christian parents have also paid heavily. A young man enrolled in a university in his own country, but far from home. He stopped associating with fellow Christians and ceased to serve Jehovah. All the things he had learned "from infancy" left him, and now he even questions the teachings of the Bible.

Unfortunately, this young man is not alone. There are others who were brought up to serve God who are now evolutionists, atheists and critics of Biblical truth. Is this because the Bible is wrong and modern philosophy is right? Not at all. It is because they were subjected to a constant onslaught of ungodly ideas at college while separated from other Christians. As a result their faith weakened and finally died. The sad thing is, they were often put in that situation by their parents.

"Bad associations spoil useful habits," said the apostle Paul. (1 Corinthians 15: 33) Some of the worst associations possible for a Christian—spiritually and morally speaking—have been found on university campuses. The above experiences show what can happen when inexperienced young people, away from their families, are thrown into an environment of immorality, drug or alcohol abuse, perversion, and rebellious political ideas. Is increased family prestige or the possibility of a better-paying job worth the price that might be paid?

A Balanced Viewpoint

But, it may be objected, not everyone who goes to university loses his Christian faith or dies of a drug overdose. This is true. Some graduates have become val-

ued and hardworking members of the Christian congregation. But consider, it is also true that not every child who plays on a busy street will get killed by a passing automobile. Some survive to grow up. But would you let your children play in the street in traffic because of that?

Does this mean that it is wrong to attend a university? This is something each parent should decide for his own child. However, in doing so, he should consider the above facts. It may be that the student can stay at home and attend college. Or perhaps he can stay with relatives who will keep a close watch on his associates and strongly encourage him to keep active in his Christian responsibilities. But considering all circumstances, will it be worth the time and effort? Will it equip him the better to serve his God?

Many parents feel that the potential benefits of a university education are not worth the possible horrendous costs, especially where the children would have to go unsupervised to another city or country. Instead, they direct their children toward some trade. For example, while in secondary school, are there courses in various trades that could help a youth to learn a skill that would enable him to make a living after he graduates? In some lands there are specialized trade schools of about a year's duration where skills can be learned, or those begun in secondary school can be more highly developed.

Such parents have also given serious thought to what they want their children to do with their lives. Do they want them to bring honor to the family? to

If pursuing secular education means sacrificing spiritual things, it is not worth the cost

get rich? or to be able to look after the parents in their old age? For a family without a Christian faith, such goals are understandable. But surely a Christian has higher goals.

The apostle Paul warned: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin." (1 Timothy 6: 9) Jesus also warned: "You cannot slave for God and for Riches." (Matthew 6: 24) Do you not agree that one reason so many university students lose their faith is that many of them are 'slaving for Riches,' or are "determined to be rich"? Failing to take to heart Bible counsel on their attitude toward material possessions, they make themselves vulnerable to other faith-destroying ideas and conduct.

The apostle John said: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:17) If you believe that, then you will give your child an education that will primarily equip him to do the will of God. 'But,' some might say, 'life today is hard, and a young person—particularly if he comes from a poor background—needs all the help he can get.' That is true. But God has promised us that if we put his kingdom first in our lives, all the things we need will be added to us. (Matthew 6:33) Can we ask for better help than that?

King David, before he became king, was forced to live as a fugitive in the wilderness. Hence, he knew what it meant to suffer privation. Yet he said: "A young

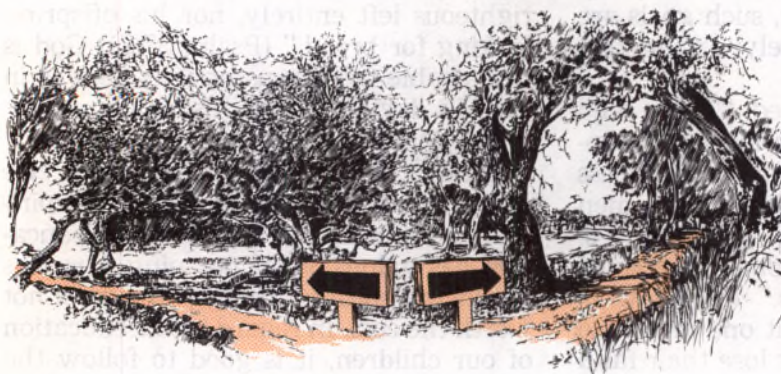
man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." (Psalm 37:25) God is just as able to help us now as he was in David's day if we put his kingdom first in our lives.

Surely, then, the best education we can give our children will balance spiritual and secular teaching. Secular education has value. But if pursuing it means sacrificing spiritual things, then it is not worth the cost. In regard to the education of our children, it is good to follow the apostle Paul's advice: "The time left is reduced. Henceforth let . . . those making use of the world [be] as those not using it to the full; for the scene of this world is changing."—1 Corinthians 7:29-31.

The results of a balanced education make all Christian parents happy. Children grow strong in faith, praising God and honoring their parents. Many young Christians, brought up in this way, are now serving as full-time preachers or missionaries, and their lives are truly satisfying. How proud their parents are of them! They really 'remember their Grand Creator in the days of their young manhood,' and thus show their faith in Him, rather than in this world.—Ecclesiastes 12:1.

When this system finally ends, young folk who have received and responded to a balanced, godly education will survive, along with their God-fearing parents, to serve God forever. Is this what you want for your child? Then help him to get an education that will benefit him for eternity.—John 17:3.

How Do You Guide Your Life?



‘WHAT does it take to have a happy life? Many persons would reply by mentioning material things, such as food, clothing and shelter, or forms of recreation and pleasure. Yet history proves that more important to your happiness are your outlook on life and your way of life. As you deal with your employer, associates and family—will you tell the truth? will you take what is not yours? will you share in certain questionable work or entertainment?

² In deciding such questions, some prefer definite rules that they either know or search out when needed. Others do what “feels” right according to their

1. What does history show to be important for happiness?

2. How do some persons guide their lives, leading to what questions?

“Happy are the ones faultless in their way, the ones walking in the law of Jehovah.”—Psalm 119:1.

conscience. However, you may be inclined to ask, Since the Bible has much to say about “conscience,” what is it? How does it function? Does it play a

vital role in our making decisions and finding happiness? And how can we be able to say, as did the apostle Paul: “I have behaved before God with a perfectly clear conscience down to this day”?—Acts 23:1.

Your Conscience—What Is It?

³ Most persons think of conscience as a general sense of what is right and wrong. We have, though, a source of more exact information about it—God’s Word. The Bible helps us to appreciate that conscience is an internal witness bearer. Thus Paul said: “My conscience bears

3, 4. What is “conscience,” and who have one?

witness with me in holy spirit." (Romans 9:1) He used the Greek word *synei'desis*, meaning, literally, a co-knowledge with oneself. So conscience is a capacity to look at oneself and render a judgment about oneself, bear witness to oneself.

⁴ Conscience is not a mere social development, for the Bible shows that God implanted it in the original human pair. (Genesis 3:7, 8) Discussing the accountability of Jews and Gentiles, Paul wrote: "For whenever people of the nations [Gentiles] that do not have law do by nature the things of the law, these people, although not having law, are a law to themselves. They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them and, between their own thoughts, they are being accused or even excused." (Romans 2:14, 15) Yes, even peoples without a written law from God have viewed as wrong things such as murder, stealing and incest. We can see also from these verses that conscience is an interplay of the heart and the mind ("thoughts").

⁵ The function of conscience that we likely are most familiar with is its judging our conduct 'after the fact,' after the wrong deed. When we conclude that we have done wrong or acted dishonorably, our conscience accuses and condemns us. (Compare 2 Samuel 24:10; 1 John 3:20.) If we respond to it, this role of conscience can help us by moving us to avoid repeating a wrong. And it might cause us to repent, apologize or even undo the damage if we can.—Psalm 32:3, 5; Matthew 5:23, 24; Luke 19:1-8.

⁶ Our conscience can serve in another way. Though some say that a good conscience is a silent one, when we face a decision or problem, our conscience should

speak up and prod us to do what is right. We find a good example in Joseph's refusing the advances of Potiphar's wife. Though God had not yet given a written law against adultery, Joseph's conscience moved him to reject immorality. (Genesis 39:1-9) If, prior to acting, we listen to our conscience, we may avoid the anguish of a troubled conscience.

⁷ The question remains: How influential should conscience be? Do you believe that most moral and personal issues should be decided on the basis of conscience? Or are rules preferable? We need to know. Also, are there dangers of which we need to be aware? What is indicated by God's Word, which states that it is "beneficial for teaching, for reproof, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness"?—2 Timothy 3:16.

Extreme Viewpoints

⁸ The conflict between rules and conscience is age old. In the article "Casuistry" the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th edition) explains that morality "has sometimes been thought of as an outward law, sometimes as an inward disposition. . . . Believers in law have put their trust in authority or logic; while believers in disposition chiefly look to our instinctive faculties—conscience, common-sense or sentiment." Extremes in both positions existed when Jesus and the apostles walked the earth. We can better appreciate the Bible's helpful balance and godly wisdom by noting the situation then.

⁹ The Jewish Pharisees zealously advocated rules. Not content with the Mosaic law, they developed numerous rules

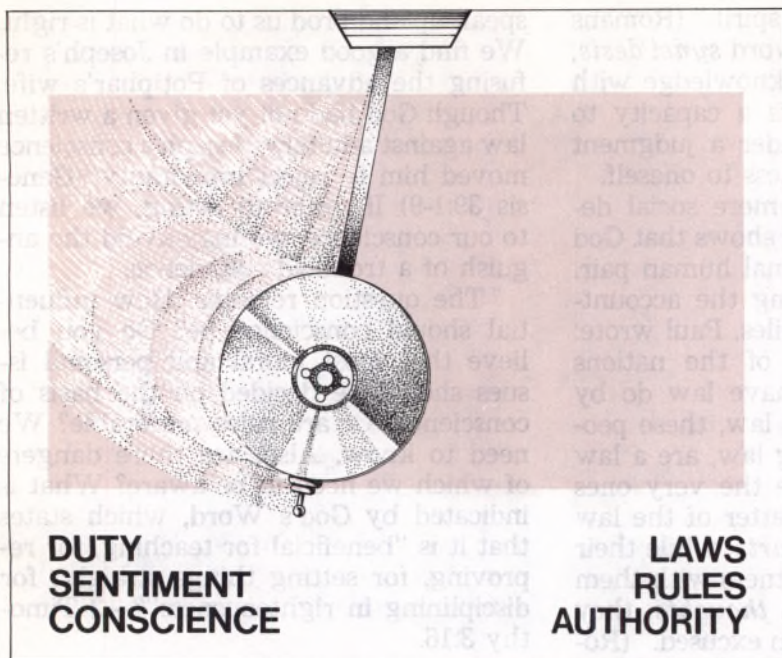
7. What are we desirous of determining from this study?

8. Morality has been viewed from what two extremes?

9, 10. (a) How did the Pharisees manifest one extreme approach? (b) In contrast, what position was common among Greeks and Romans?

5. What is one way your conscience functions?

6. How else can your conscience operate?



In moral matters,
people have often
swung from one
extreme to another

or "commands of men" that invalidated God's commands. Besides developing these rules that went beyond what God asked, their legalistic outlook encouraged the view that righteousness could result from knowing and keeping these human regulations.—Matthew 15:1-20; 23:1-5; Luke 18:9-12.

¹⁰ "At the opposite pole stood ancient Greece," comments classical scholar Samuel H. Butcher. "Among the Greeks . . . no system of doctrine and observance, no manuals containing authoritative rules of morality, were ever transmitted in documentary form. . . . Unvarying rules petrified action." As to the Romans, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: "Cicero and Seneca took common-sense as their guide. They decided each problem on its merits, looking more to the spirit than to the letter." This Grecian/Roman philosophy was popular in the first century. Would it appeal to Christians? Paul wrote: "Look out: perhaps there may be

someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception . . . according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ."—Colossians 2:8; Acts 17:18-21.

¹¹ In later centuries, too, both extremes had their advocates, even among persons called Christians. The Jesuits were noted for stressing a morality based on innumerable Church laws. After the Reformation, Protestantism emphasized individualism and conscience, which has led to the current view known as "situation ethics," popularized by Episcopalian Dr. Joseph Fletcher. *The National Observer* reports: "Dr. Fletcher has spelled out a controversial manifesto of individual freedom and responsibility, based on an ethic of brotherly love, which he says should free modern man from rigid, archaic rules and codes like the 'Ten

11. How were the two extremes evident later in history?

Commandments.' . . . With love as the only guide, then, abortion, premarital sex, divorce, . . . and other conventional wrongs become morally acceptable to Dr. Fletcher in some situations."

¹² Clearly, humans tend toward extremes—being guided either by rules or by conscience. Some who see the weakness of one extreme overreact by going to the other extreme, just as a pendulum swings from the far right to the far left. For example, during the Middle Ages the pendulum swung from the rule-minded attitude of the Jesuits to the Reformationists' stress on freedom and conscience. Also, you may know parents who were overly strict in rearing their children. But when these children grew up, they reacted by going to the opposite extreme, allowing their own offspring to take any and all liberties, with disastrous results. We can see the truth of the Bible comment: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."—Jeremiah 10:23.

God's Balanced, Helpful Guidance

¹³ Jehovah has provided balanced help for Christians in the Scriptures so that we can avoid: (1) legalistically overstressing rules, which can lead to a petty, rigid view of life and worship, or (2) overemphasizing freedom of conscience, which has led some into human reasonings that even excuse wrongdoing. To absorb the balance of God's Word and benefit from its guidance, we need David's attitude: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths. Make me walk in your truth and teach me, for

12. What danger confronts us that we need to avoid?

13. The Bible provides us with what help as to morality and conscience?

you are my God of salvation."—Psalm 25:4, 5.

¹⁴ The Bible reveals Jesus' disapproval of the rule-oriented mentality of the scribes and Pharisees. A few Jews who did not want to use their God-given thinking ability might have liked regulations on how far up the arm to wash, what was "work" on the sabbath,* which crops must be tithed, and so on. That approach resulted in burdensome rules, called for endless interpretations and diverted attention from the spirit and weightier aspects of the Scriptures. Jesus told the religious leaders: "You give the tenth of the mint and the dill and the cumin, but you have disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and mercy and faithfulness."—Matthew 23:23; Mark 7:3, 4.

¹⁵ The Mosaic law contributed to the spirituality, morality and health of the Jews, also proving to them that as sinners they needed the Messiah. (Galatians 3:19, 23-25; Romans 7:7-14) Because it was a perfect standard, no Israelite could keep it faultlessly and thus obtain a perfect conscience. (Hebrews 9:9, 10) Hence, even though this legal code was of divine origin, once God's purpose for it was ended, he took it out of the way. Then, instead of dealing with his Name people on the basis of an extensive written code, God would 'put his laws in their minds and in their hearts.'—Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 10:16; 2 Corinthians 3:5-11.

¹⁶ With this in mind, persons today who oversee or coordinate others' activities must take care not to burden them with unnecessary human regula-

* See "Questions From Readers" on page 30.

14, 15. What can we learn from the Christian Greek Scriptures as to the Jews' view of the Law and God's?

16. What lesson is here presented for (a) persons who are very strict with themselves, and (b) us and our view of rules?

Persons who are very demanding of themselves need to guard against the tendency to make and enforce many rules for others

tions. The inclination to do that may be strong in those who are very strict or demanding of themselves and who thus feel that others should view matters the same way. Paul, however, wrote Christians: "Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing." (2 Corinthians 1:24) Related to this, Christians in general should guard against wanting someone with authority to make rules on every matter. We should, instead, increase in knowledge of what God's Word says so as to train our consciences and perceptive powers.—Hebrews 5:14.

¹⁷ Another danger, though, is swinging to the opposite extreme, feeling that each Christian is free to do virtually anything that his conscience permits. A few recently have made an issue of this, saying "Christianity is not a religion of rules" and referring to passages such as: "You were, of course, called for freedom, brothers; only do not use this freedom as an inducement for the flesh, but through love slave for one another. For the entire Law stands fulfilled in one saying, namely: 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Galatians 5:13, 14) It is true that Christians are not under the Mosaic law or any other extensive code of divine laws. Yet we should watch that 'no man deludes us with persuasive arguments ("persuasive and attractive arguments and beguiling speech," *Amplified Bible*), for an honest examination of the Bible shows that it does provide some laws or rules for us.—Colossians 2:4.

17. Against what other incorrect view do we need to guard?

Christians Are Not Lawless

¹⁸ Paul wrote to the Corinthians that a man guilty of fornication should be expelled. He added that idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, greedy persons, drunkards, revilers and extortioners "will not inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 5:1, 6, 7, 11-13; 6:9-11) We also read that Christians must 'abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from things strangled and from fornication' and that supposed brothers who promote false teachings are to be rejected. (Acts 15:28, 29; Titus 3:10; 2 John 9-11) Plainly, laws are involved here. A practitioner of such sins cannot become a true Christian. And if a servant of God unrepentantly carries on these sins, he must be disfellowshipped.

¹⁹ We also find Bible rules on matters that are not disfellowshipping offenses. For example, Paul wrote that single Christians should marry "only in the Lord," and he ordered that "if anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat." (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Thessalonians 3:10) Someone might reason, 'Since I would not be expelled for disobeying that advice, these must not be serious rules.' What unwise thinking! God views these rules as serious. Did not Paul tell the Thessalonians to 'mark' and "stop associating with" lazy persons willfully disobeying the rule about working? —2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15.*

* See *The Watchtower* of September 1, 1981, pages 20, 21; March 15, 1982, page 31.

18, 19. Where do Christians stand regarding Bible laws and rules?

Some have mistakenly felt that a Christian is free to do anything that his conscience permits

²⁰ Some rules are specifically for the congregation's good. For instance, in the past some Christians could speak in tongues. Paul directed that only two or three of them speak on an occasion, that they take turns, and that a translator be present—rules that promoted peace and order. (1 Corinthians 14:26-33) Similarly, the elders of a congregation today might provide directions about keeping Kingdom Hall exits clear, not saving seats needlessly, or parking vehicles with consideration for neighbors and safety. Such congregational rules are not unscriptural for they have the same purpose (peace and good order) as did Paul's advice about tongues. Related to this is the Biblical advice: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you." (Hebrews 13:17) Since our avoiding sins such as lying or stealing involves obedience to God, this text must refer to our obeying the elders' guidance in congregational matters. Nor is it difficult to do so if they are not legislatively "lording it over those who are God's inheritance." —1 Peter 5:3.

²¹ Other "rules" or ways of doing things benefit the worldwide flock. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses are asked to turn in reports on their witnessing. (Compare Acts 2:41, 42; 8:14.) A person who swings toward the extreme of individual freedom might disagree with this procedure. Yet think of the good done because those overseeing the flock have been able to know from the reports the extent to which the kingdom witness

has been given, where help is needed, and when new disciples can be formed into a congregation. And have we not enjoyed reading the worldwide reports? (Ezekiel 9:11; Mark 6:30; Acts 14:21-23; 15:3; 19:1-6) Trusting that God is directing his people, we can manifest a spirit of support and cooperation.

²² Beyond specific laws or rules, the Scriptures contain helpful principles that wise Christians may apply in order to be "faultless in their way." (Psalm 119:1) Principles are especially helpful in attuning our conscience to God's thinking. But what does that mean as to 'matters of conscience'? Some have had the feeling, 'If it is something that is up to my conscience, it is entirely a personal matter what I do.' Let us examine the matter in the following article and learn further how we can train our conscience to get the greatest benefit from it.

22. Why do we need to study the matter of conscience further?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ What is your conscience, and in what ways can it help you?
- ☐ What two extremes as to morality have existed?
- ☐ How does the Bible help us to have the right view of moral guidance?
- ☐ We need what Scriptural viewpoint as to laws or rules?

20, 21. What can we learn about congregational guidelines, and how should we feel about them?

Benefiting from Your God-Given Conscience

THOUGH God has not given Christians an extensive code of laws, he has provided us with some laws, or direct rules, and many principles to apply in accord with our faith and conscience. But it is one thing to have a conscience, and another thing to benefit fully from it. Many persons feel that 'if something does not bother my conscience, it is all right.' Is that thinking correct?

² The Bible shows that because of our sinful flesh our conscience can mislead us; it can be weak, misguided or defiled. We can better appreciate the danger of the view "let your conscience be your guide" by considering the first-century inhabitants of Crete, who were known for being "liars, injurious wild beasts, unemployed gluttons."—Titus 1:10-12.

³ As with all peoples, the Cretans had inborn consciences. But they were not benefiting from these. Writing to Titus in Crete, the apostle Paul said: "All things are clean to clean persons. But to persons defiled and faithless nothing is clean, but both their minds and their consciences are defiled." (Titus 1:15; Romans 2:14, 15) Most Cretans had insensitive

"The law of his God is in his heart; his steps will not wobble."—Psalm 37:31.

consciences that were not helping them to do what was moral or clean. (1 Timothy 4:2) 'Nothing was clean' to many Cretans. How

so? With defiled consciences they looked on each situation as an opportunity to do what was wicked. They might have said, 'It does not bother my conscience.' But it should have! However, some Cretan Jews or proselytes were in Jerusalem for Pentecost 33 C.E. Their spiritual knowledge would have helped them to avoid being liars, injurious or gluttonous. And those accepting Jesus were further helped by his teaching to have good, working consciences.—Acts 2:5, 11; Titus 1:5; 2:2-5; 3:3-7.

⁴ Conscience, though, can mislead even a person who is exposed to God's Word and wants to do right. Saul, or Paul, was acquainted with the Scriptures and zealously worshiped according to the Law. Yet he failed to keep up with the progressive outworking of God's will. After the Messiah arrived, preached and died in fulfillment of prophecy, Paul continued to practice Pharisaic Judaism. His conscience did not prevent him from "persecuting the congregation" and "breathing threat and murder against the disciples

- 1, 2. Why should we be concerned about guidance from our conscience? (Proverbs 12:15; 14:12)
3. What effect did conscience have on the Cretans?

- 4, 5. What can we learn about conscience from the case of Paul?

of the Lord.”—Philippians 3:4-6; Acts 9:1, 2.

⁵ These examples show that our conscience can misguide us. Since we face many decisions that are not covered by specific Bible laws but that are matters of conscience, we need to know how we can train our conscience and benefit most fully from it. There are three areas that we will now consider.

What Does God's Word Indicate?

⁶ The perfect Word of God contains much that can enlighten us as to God's thinking, or principles, and educate our conscience. As already noted, Joseph had no written law of God against adultery. But Joseph's conscience was educated correctly. He no doubt had reasoned on the fact that God purposed for husband and wife (“the two”) to be one flesh, without intrusion of any adulterous third party. And Joseph certainly knew of the experience involving God's friend, Abraham, which gave indication of God's position on adultery.—Matthew 19:5; Genesis 2:24; 20:1-18.

⁷ We can benefit similarly. For example, we might face a decision about accepting an invitation to have a meal or do business with someone of a different nationality, race or background. That is something for personal decision. If, though, we have absorbed from the Bible God's attitude of impartiality and fairness, our educated conscience will counteract any prejudice that might have surrounded us as we grew up. We will act accordingly. (Acts 10:34, 35;

James 2:1-4) Thus Bible principles can help us also.

⁸ When we need to decide a matter so as to “hold a good conscience,” we should seek what Jehovah says that relates to the matter, for that can and should affect our conscience and our decision. (1 Peter 3:16) In addition to looking for outright laws, we ought to be interested in whether there are any Biblical principles relating to it. Did Jesus do or say anything indicating his thinking on such a decision? We can do research in Bible study aids that discuss the matter. And we can consult with fellow Christians who might help us to locate relevant Bible principles. Of course, this step should not be taken with the idea of their bearing our responsibility, nor should we ask, ‘If it were up to you, what would you do?’—Galatians 6:5.

⁹ In situations where a personal decision must be made, sincere Christians ought to follow a course that will leave them with a clean and untroubled conscience before God. They should cherish the ability to say: “Our conscience bears

8. When facing a decision of conscience, what should we do?

9. What is our goal in deciding on conscience issues?



A fellow Christian may help you to locate what God's Word says on a matter of conscience

6, 7. What is one way in which God's Word can help us in matters of conscience?

witness . . . that with holiness and godly sincerity . . . we have conducted ourselves in the world, but more especially toward you." (2 Corinthians 1:12) How much a Christian loves Jehovah and his principles may be displayed in what he decides on questions of conscience.

How Will Others Be Affected?

¹⁰ Since Christians want their consciences to motivate them to imitate God, loving concern for others should be a major influence in decisions involving conscience. This aspect came into the picture when Paul wrote about various matters relating to food.

¹¹ In the Corinthian congregation concern arose about meat that had been sacrificed to idols. It would have been idolatry for a Christian to eat sacrificial meat during an idol ceremony. But Paul explained that it was not a sin to eat leftover meat sold in restaurant-like businesses connected to a temple or in public meat markets. (1 Corinthians 8:10; 10:25; Acts 15:29) Nonetheless, some Christians who had previously worshiped idols were sensitive (had weak consciences) about eating such meat even when it was sold publicly with no religious connections. While not condoning weak consciences, Paul urged others to consider these brothers. It would have been unloving to do what might cause these to stumble or to feel conscientiously free to share in idolatry again.

¹² Paul displayed the attitude that we all need: "If food [or anything else] makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat flesh at all." If, on a matter that is up to our conscience, and we therefore have freedom to act, we ignore the conscience of others and thus 'ruin our

10, 11. A question about food in ancient Corinth illustrates what second aspect as to questions involving conscience?

12, 13. Why should the views and consciences of others be considered? Illustrate.

brothers for whom Christ died,' we could lose our good standing with God. Paul asked: "Why should it be that my freedom is judged by another person's conscience?" (1 Corinthians 8:3, 11-13; 10:29) Even though an individual feels it is a 'personal matter of conscience,' if it damages others it can lead to his receiving Jehovah's adverse judgment. This shows how deceptive it can be to think 'if it is up to my conscience, it is all right.'

¹³ Consider the experience of a couple who were having a Bible study, attending meetings and approaching baptism. An elder in the congregation told the man of his having enjoyed a certain motion picture. The man replied, 'What! Do you go to see R-rated movies?*' The elder tried to excuse his actions, saying that certain of these films (considered questionable even by the world) have value if the objectionable aspects are ignored. But it appears that the man was affected. After that he progressed more slowly than his wife. Had the elder reflected on texts such as Colossians 3:2-8, Ephesians 5:3-5 and Matthew 7:12, they might have affected his conscience and his conduct.—1 Corinthians 9:22, 25-27.

¹⁴ Considering others also involves not asking them to approve of something that is against their consciences. For instance, the congregational elders are responsible for permitting wedding ceremonies in the Kingdom Hall, how these will be conducted, how the hall is decorated, and so forth.† The elders in one congregation write: "In one wedding all the bridesmaids walked down the

* In the United States films rated R are deemed unsuitable for persons under age seventeen (unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian) because of the theme or the degree of sex, violence or profanity.

† See *The Watchtower* of May 1, 1974, pages 274-277.

14, 15. How might the conscience of the body of elders have a bearing on certain personal matters?

aisle fanning themselves. The next wedding had to outdo the first, so the bridesmaids walked down the aisle twirling umbrellas. The next had to be bigger and better; they wanted twenty bridesmaids and twenty ushers. The hall was starting to be used as a circus."

¹⁵ Was this 'a matter of conscience' for private decision? No. Even if an engaged couple's consciences would permit something excessive or

outrageous, the collective conscience of the elders could not be ignored. While not wanting to impose their personal tastes, they have at heart the peace, harmony and spirituality of the whole congregation. And they should be conscientiously aiding persons to 'know how to conduct themselves in God's household, which is a pillar and support of the truth.'—1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

¹⁶ So, when facing a decision on 'a matter of conscience,' we need to reflect on, (1) what God's Word says relating to it, and (2) how our decision might affect or involve others. There is an important third aspect, though.

How Will We Ourselves Be Affected?

¹⁷ *Natural History* magazine of August 1981 contained an article on New York City's bicycle messengers who de-

16. If you have to decide a matter that is up to your conscience, what should you consider?

17. How did conscience influence a brother in New York City?



Consider how your decisions or actions may affect others

liver urgent packages and letters to businesses around the city. Among examples of men who have taken up this form of work, we read: "Donald, a 41-year-old messenger, is able to support his wife and 15-year-old son on his earnings. Donald was a film processor, but abandoned his profession because, as a Jehovah's Witness, he could not condone the role he played in producing pornographic material. As a messenger, not only does he feel his conscience is clear but he can also leave work at his own discretion to devote more time to proselytizing."

¹⁸ Various factors bear on employment decisions (see box on page 26). Similar to Donald's case, a Christian might be working for a firm that processes films—snapshots, home movies, advertising films, commercial motion pictures. Gradually it takes on some pornographic material. At some point the Christian's conscience will begin troubling him. He may find that

18. (a) How might this brother have reached his decision? (b) What lesson can you learn from this?

he himself is being forced into involvement with pornography or other illegal activity. Whether because of being identified with a firm handling pornography or because of what he is being asked to do, he may find that he must quit in order to remain "irreprehensible," which would be of special concern to persons having or seeking privileges in the congregation. In searching for other work, he may confidently look for Jehovah's blessing. (1 Timothy 3:2, 8-10; Romans 13:5) Doubtless there are many Christians who have left such jobs rather than let

uncleanliness undermine them. (Compare Matthew 5:28.) Hence, when we face a decision of conscience, we should ask: 'If I do this thing or refuse to do it, how will it affect *me*?' We certainly should not ignore our conscience, searing it and thus making it easier to do what is bad in the future.—1 Timothy 4:2; Jude 10; Ephesians 4:18, 19.

¹⁹ Reflecting on the conscientious decision that Donald made, we should note

19, 20. (a) How might both conscience and faith exert an influence as to our ministry? (b) Wealthy or not, what should be our desire?

Employment Factors to Consider

When a Christian must make a decision about a certain employment, he should give thought first to what he would actually be doing. He might consider these two points:

Is the particular work condemned in the Bible?

The Bible condemns things such as stealing, idolatry and the misuse of blood, so a Christian could hardly engage in work where he directly promoted such things.

Would doing the work so closely link a person with a condemned practice that he would be a clear accomplice?

Even a janitor or a receptionist at a blood bank or a plant making only weapons of war is directly linked with work contrary to God's Word.—Leviticus 17:13, 14; Isaiah 2:2-4.

Beyond what a person would actually be doing, some additional factors may have a bearing on the overall picture:

Is the work a human service that is not Biblically wrong?

A postman performs the service of delivering mail to homes and businesses. Would a Christian be condemned if among the places where he delivers mail

are a few homes of thieves or a firm selling idols?—Matthew 5:45.

To what extent does one have authority over what is done?

A Christian owning a store would not stock and sell idols or blood sausage. He is not in the same situation as an employee at a supermarket that sells cigarettes or blood pudding among thousands of other items.

To what degree is the person involved?

An employee working as a cashier and only occasionally handling cigarettes might conclude that his situation is not the same as another employee who stocks these on the shelves almost all day.

What is the source of the pay or the location where it is done?

In a land where the government gives a church oversight of all social programs, a man might get his paycheck from a religious corporation. But actually his work of maintaining public parks is not on church property. Nor is it religious in nature or viewed as promoting false worship.

What is the overall effect of doing certain work?

Would doing the work stumble many, bringing on 'reprehensibility'? (1 Timothy 3:2, 10) How would it affect the worker's conscience?

that in addition to his seeking an approved relationship with Jehovah, he desired to proclaim his faith more. This agrees with Paul's linkage of conscience and faith: "The objective of this mandate is love out of a clean heart and out of a good conscience and out of faith without hypocrisy."—1 Timothy 1:5.

²⁰ It is commendable when a person's faith and desire for a good conscience move him to make adjustments so that "his steps will not wobble" and so that he can give more time and attention to spreading "all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:26, 27) How, though, should we view others whose circumstances appear to allow them to do more preaching but who do not do so? They might have a large income from their jobs or businesses and seem already to have finances ample for a comfortable life in this system. Yet, instead of rejoicing in disciple making full time as pioneers, they keep working on expanding their businesses, homes and comforts.* (Compare Mark 10:17-22; Luke 12:16-21.) It is not for us to judge others in such an area, for "each of us will render an account for himself to God." Rather, let our faith unhypocritically move us to serve God to the full so that we can enjoy a clean conscience.—Romans 14:1-4, 10-12.

Guided by a Good Conscience

²¹ A properly educated and sensitive Christian conscience will guide us to do what is good. It did so in the case of Paul. He was so interested in 'his brothers,' fel-

* The local congregation would benefit from more pioneers. However, many interested persons who hunger spiritually are located in areas to which few can move because there are no job opportunities. What a blessing it is when Christians who are financially secure respond to these calls for help!—Acts 16:9, 10.

21. What positive effect can our conscience have on us?

low Jews, that he wrote: "My conscience bears witness with me in holy spirit, that I have great grief and unceasing pain in my heart." (Romans 9:1-3) Yes, he did all he possibly could to share the good news of Christianity with them.

²² It should be the same with us. If we appreciate the value of our God-given conscience, we will not be inclined to think just in terms of rules. Rules might set out minimum requirements, or goals. But a conscience stimulated by love and faith likely will make even greater demands on us, moving us to greater sacrifices and unselfishness. In that way we certainly will benefit from our conscience. It will keep us from the things that might result in God's disapproval, and it will aid us in doing things that he definitely approves. Particularly is that so as our conscience guides us toward having a larger share in proclaiming the good news. What greater benefit could there be than what Paul mentioned to Timothy? He said: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you."—1 Timothy 4:16.

22. Why can conscience motivate us even beyond what rules might do?

Can You Recall?

- ☐ Why is it dangerous to feel that 'if something does not bother my conscience, it must be all right'?
- ☐ When faced with a question that is up to your conscience, what are three factors that you should seriously consider?
- ☐ What bearing should conscience have on your praising God publicly?

An Appreciated Feature —

“God’s Word Is Alive”

FOR over two years now *The Watchtower*, in most fifteenth of the month issues, has contained the two-page, specially illustrated feature “God’s Word Is Alive.” These articles are written in a simple, easy-to-understand style that is designed to appeal particularly to young people, as well as to persons not yet familiar with Bible teachings. Have you been enjoying this feature? Have you used it in teaching others? Many have. One reader writes:

“This is just a note of appreciation for the excellent *Watchtower* series ‘God’s Word Is Alive.’ The fact that the articles are short, abundantly illustrated and centered on basic Bible doctrines makes them ideal for study with my children. The articles are also easy to review by virtue of their easy-to-read layout, making it possible for the life-giving information taught therein to be reinforced.

“In addition, I often leave *Watchtowers* opened to these articles in field service, feeling that the pictures and strongly worded question-themes will teach the householder something even if he barely gives the article a glance.”

A number of readers have written to tell of the fine personal benefit the articles have brought to them. A mother from Olympia, Washington, says:

“My daughter is only fourteen months old but she loves to be read to, especially from ‘adult’ magazines. You can imagine how happy these articles have made her. She loves her ‘story’ book, but these seem even more special as

they are always new and different. They are brief enough for her short attention span and the illustrations catch and hold her interest.

“The contents are also a good reminder for myself and my husband, often reminding us of points we have forgotten. We are going to keep a scrapbook so we can refer back to them time and time again. . . . I use them in service when I see a householder has children, and most persons I show them to accept them thankfully.”

A letter along similar lines was received from Cologne, Germany. “For a long time I have been wishing to write,” the reader began, “to express my thanks and appreciation for the two-paged articles ‘God’s Word Is Alive,’ which are a help not just for me, as an adult, but especially for my children.” The person goes on to observe:

“*My Book of Bible Stories* was a great joy for us, but what it conveys is limited. As we adults need regular spiritual food, so do our children. . . . In this connection I came to appreciate the above-mentioned articles that you started last year. They are on a certain subject, but are generally simply and pointedly written. They are always illustrated with a picture for nearly each scene. The children like the *Bible Story* book very much, but often there are points discussed that are not shown in the picture, and it is generally history. Thus, the articles in ‘God’s Word Is Alive’ are at least as much appreciated by them, perhaps even more.”

Other readers describe how the arrival of magazines with this special feature is awaited by family members. A mother from Ogdensburg, New York, says that her "six-year-old eagerly awaits that copy each month." She notes:

"My husband has incorporated this as a regular feature of our son's Bible study. My husband says it's like getting an addition to the *Bible Story* book once a month! The new material really sparks our son's interest. Although he loves his *Bible Story* book, he pretty much knows every story in it, but he never knows what to expect of his new story each month, and he really gets excited about it. If he gets our mail out of the box, he's the first one to grab the magazines and rip off the wrappers hoping to find a new story inside! We hope this feature will continue for many more issues."

A mother from Seattle, Washington, offered thanks for the new *Watchtower* feature, and explained:

"Eleven years ago I prayed to God that he would show me the truth for I just had my first child and didn't know how I could ever raise her properly in this wicked world. Within two weeks I was approached by Jehovah's Witnesses and started to study with them. Now, years later, I have two fine Christian girls who come home for lunch every day to hear of the fine examples of real Christians recorded in the magazines and

to hear such articles as 'God's Word Is Alive.' I am so thankful Jehovah heard and answered my prayer for help and that he keeps answering it through the magazines."

A father from Duluth, Georgia, notes the permanent value of these articles:

"I have been collecting the 'God's Word Is Alive' and have found them to be very good for referring back to from time to time. They are brief but yet contain so much. I have made it a hobby to clip each one and place it in a picture album. I have the whole year of 1981 'God's Word Is Alive' in the album. I have found them to be truly enjoyable to share with others and especially with my own children, and I have even used the information they contain in my field service work."

After expressing such appreciation for these articles, this father concluded his letter: "I was deeply disappointed to find the January 15, 1982, *Watchtower* missing 'God's Word Is Alive' and hope they have not been discontinued. I am eagerly awaiting next month's *Watchtower*."

"God's Word Is Alive" appeared in the February 15th issue, and in every 15th of the month issue since then. And there are plans to continue this feature for some time to come. It is our hope that you will enjoy reading it yourself and be able to use it to help many others to learn the basic truths of God's Word.

Valuable for Teaching New Ones

"I like the very simple language that is used, something every household should be able to understand. We need something of this nature to get through to the people. I hope

these articles will continue. These are not just stories, they prove doctrines too. I think they're great."

—An appreciative reader of "God's Word Is Alive"

Questions from Readers

■ Is it all right to break God's law in order to save a life, as has been reasoned from Matthew 12:1-8?

Though some persons having that view have referred to Matthew 12:1-8 for support, a careful consideration of the Scriptures shows that it is an incorrect conclusion.

When passing through a grain-field, Jesus' disciples gleaned a small amount of grain, as permitted by the Law. (Leviticus 19:9, 10; Deuteronomy 24:19-21) The Pharisees criticized them for doing this *on the sabbath*. These religious leaders had added to the Law many interpretations, especially as to what was unlawful "work" on the sabbath. According to these *human rules*, and the legalistic mentality behind them, by what they did the disciples were guilty of two forms of work, harvesting ("plucking") and threshing ("rubbing" the grains). (Matthew 12:1; Luke 6:1) However, Jesus said:

"Have you not read what David did when he and the men with him got hungry? How . . . they ate the loaves of presentation, something that it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests only? Or, have you not read in the Law that on the sabbaths the priests in the temple treat the sabbath as not sacred and continue guiltless? But I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. However, if you had understood what this means, 'I want mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless ones. For the Lord of the sabbath is what the Son of man is."—Matthew 12:3-8.

Christ was referring to the in-

cident when David and his men, fleeing from murderous King Saul, went to High Priest Ahimelech at Nob. David indicated that he was on a secret assignment from the king and asked for bread. "There is no ordinary bread under my hand," Ahimelech told him, "but there is holy bread; provided that the young men have at least kept themselves from womankind." He meant the showbread (or, loaves of presentation), consisting of twelve unleavened cakes placed weekly on a table in the Holy of the tabernacle. As fresh cakes were presented each sabbath, the older ones were removed and 'became Aaron's and his sons', to eat in a holy place.' David explained that his men were ceremonially clean, and he implied that they were in a sense holy, being on a mission from Jehovah's anointed king. So Ahimelech "gave him what was holy, . . . the showbread that had been removed from before Jehovah."—1 Samuel 21:1-6; Leviticus 24:5-9.

In the light of all of this, what about the view that God's commands can be ignored 'if life is at stake'? Persons have reasoned: 'God overlooked David's breaking a serious command when his life was in danger; also Jesus condoned violating the sabbath and said that you could do good and save a soul on the sabbath.' (Luke 6:9; Matthew 12:11, 12) Yet, such thinking proves to be deceptive and contrary to the Bible.

For example, this reasoning as-

sumes that you accept the premise that David and Jesus' disciples were in 'life or death' situations. But were they? The Bible does not say that David and his men were on the verge of starving to death because there was no other food to be found. In fact, according to geographical authorities, Nob was just north of the Mount of Olives, within a few miles of Jerusalem and many towns. A direct reading of the account allows for the conclusion that David and his men were basically hungry and seeking a meal from someone whom they trusted. Similarly, the Bible tells us that when Jesus' disciples "*got hungry*" on the sabbath they gleaned and ate some grain. They must have eaten on the previous day, and on the day after the sabbath they could buy food in surrounding villages. (John 4:8; Matthew 14:15) So, if an individual wants to use these incidents to show when God's laws can be broken, he might as well say that at any time people 'get hungry' it is all right to violate Jehovah's commands. Obviously that is not correct.

We still need to know, however, what is the meaning of Matthew 12:1-8. Jesus was exposing the Pharisees' narrow, legalistic view. We can better appreciate this by giving thought to the object of the sabbath, and by noting carefully Jesus' explanation.

Why were Israelites not to work on the sabbath? Was the object simply to forbid work? No. It was so that secular pursuits, such as working for food and clothing, would not consume all the peo-

ple's time and attention. The sabbath arrangement advanced true worship by assuring that the people would have time for worship without being distracted by normal work. (Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13) Jesus encouraged this understanding rather than the narrow view of the Pharisees.

He said that even priests serving at the temple could be accused of 'treating the sabbath as not sacred' and thus of breaking the law. How? Well, the priests worked hard on the sabbath butchering sacrificial animals. Were they lawbreakers? Christ said that those priests 'continued guiltless.' Their labors at the temple, rather than interfering with worship, contributed to it. As Jesus (who was "greater than the temple" and would offer the ultimate sacrifice) went about with his disciples, they were teaching God's Word and thus promoting true worship. Hence, they were not violating the sabbath by gleanings a bit to eat. Nor, as Jesus explained, would it have been contrary to the spirit of the sabbath law to 'save a soul' by pulling a sheep out of a pit, even though it was a day for worship.—Matthew 12:5, 11; Luke 6:9.

Also, it was technically 'not lawful for David to eat' the showbread because the Law said that this was for the priests. Yet Jehovah's high priest gave it to David. On what basis? The loaves removed from the showbread table were "holy," not to be treated as ordinary, such as by being given to a common laborer or eaten on a pleasure outing. They were to be used as food for the priests, men engaged in God's service. So when David came on what apparently was a special mission from God's anointed king, and the high priest determined that the men were ceremonially clean, it was not wrong

to share the showbread. That was in accord with the basic use that God designated for it.

Contrast this with the incident when Israelite soldiers in Saul's army violated God's law on blood, as related at 1 Samuel 14:32-35. They had been in battle with the Philistines, enemies of Jehovah's people. Tired and hungry from the fight, some Israelites slaughtered animals and "fell to eating [meat] along with the blood." Whether it is claimed that this was a case of satisfying a powerful hunger or that it was an emergency situation, breaking the law on blood was not excusable. It was 'sinning against Jehovah' and it called for special sacrifices in behalf of those who 'sinned against Jehovah by eating along with the blood.'

It was sin because in giving the law on blood God said that while humans could eat animal flesh to keep alive they should not sustain their lives by taking in blood. (Genesis 9:3, 4) He gave no allowance for breaking that law if it seemed that 'life was at stake.' The Creator decreed that blood was sacred. Saving life with blood was not to be by taking it into the body in any way. But by Christ's

giving his blood in sacrifice everlasting life would be possible. —Ephesians 1:7.

The record of the early Christians who were put to the test by Roman authorities agrees with this and illustrates that we should not think that God's law can be broken in 'life or death' situations. Sometimes their test was, either eat blood sausage or die in the arena. Would the Christians violate God's law on blood and renounce their standing with him? Or, when pressured to burn a pinch of incense to the deity of the emperor, would they break God's command against idolatry? History proves that faithful Christians refused to break God's commands even when their present life was at stake. Though they lost their lives obeying Jehovah's law, they had the assurance of eternal life. —Matthew 16:25, 26.

Consequently, the Scriptures do not endorse the view that divine commands can be broken in a difficult situation. Rather, we are told: "By this we gain the knowledge that we are loving the children of God, when we are loving God and doing his commandments." —1 John 5:2.

■ In *The Watchtower* of April 15, 1982, page 26, paragraph 19, it states that in the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses at Gbarnga, Liberia, in March 1963, a few compromised but the majority maintained their integrity. However, the *Yearbook* for 1977 states that the majority compromised their faith. Why this discrepancy?

The statement in *The Watchtower* for April 15, 1982, is in error. Actually, according to the *Yearbook* of 1977, pages 176 and 178, there were about 100 Liberian Witnesses who went through the Gbarnga persecution maintaining integrity, while approximately 200 compromised their faith.

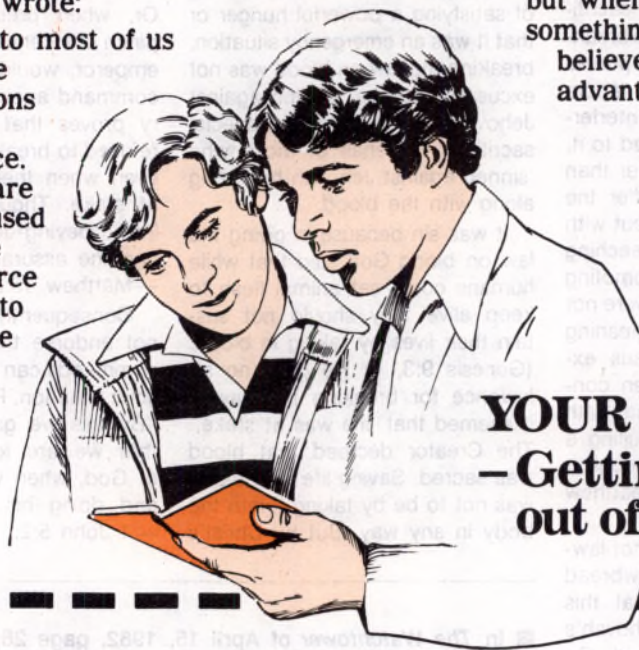
Of course, if we were to take the combined, worldwide picture of the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses, it will certainly be established beyond doubt that by far the great majority have proved faithful under persecution, and only a relatively small minority have compromised their faith.

A Helpful Guide for Youth

The book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It* has had a tremendous distribution of over eighteen million copies during the past six years. Why? The comments of one reader of it give some idea. He wrote:

"It's obvious to most of us that youth have many temptations and difficult decisions to face. Often parents are also very confused as to their role and lack a source of information to guide them. I've

just read a book *Youth, Getting the Best out of It*, put out by Jehovah's Witnesses, that has much good advice for people of all religions. . . . I'm not 'plugging' that religion in its entirety, but when they have something good to offer, I believe it wisdom to take advantage of it."



YOUR YOUTH —Getting the Best out of It