September 15, 1985

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

ADVERSITY

—How Can We Face It?

September 15, 1985
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The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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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 continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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A World Full of Adversity

NEVER before in history has mankind undergone so much affliction, oppression, and suffering. Disasters have become almost as common as the air we breathe. Describing the period since the year 1914, one journal commented: "This has been a time of extraordinary disorder and violence, both across national frontiers and within them."

Especially agonizing is the tendency toward uncontrolled brutality in present-day warfare. In one small African country, a seven-year struggle took more than 20,000 lives. There were abductions, rapings, and similar acts. Elderly people and young children became victims of land mines, rocket fire, and just plain brutality.

When we view adversity from the standpoint of individuals, the sadness of the situation stands out very clearly. For instance, try to put yourself in the place of a woman who, with her children present, was forced at gunpoint to sing and clap her hands while a gang of men slowly hacked her husband to death. What would your reaction be? Yes, there is truly "anguish of nations," and the *individual* suffers the adversity.—Luke 21:25.

Christians often avoid calamities because of maintaining strict neutrality and keeping away from places where violence is most likely to occur. (John 17:16) However, they cannot avoid all calamity, and at times they suffer, as do those who are part of the world. Through violence and deceit, Satan the Devil can cause untimely deaths. Since part of the message declared worldwide by Jehovah's Witnesses includes exposing the Devil's works, should we not expect Satan to use his "means to cause death" in an effort to do away with these message bearers? The Scriptures so indicate.—Hebrews 2:14, 15; Revelation 2:10; 12:12, 17.

Christians Face Further Sufferings

In addition to the adversities confronting people in general, faithful followers of Jesus Christ must endure the persecution that comes upon them because of their firm stand for the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah God, and his Kingdom. After describing distressing events that would portend the conclusion of the system of man-rule under Satan, Jesus said: "Then people will deliver you [Jesus' disciples] up to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name." Mark quotes Jesus as adding, "And you will be beaten." —Matthew 24:3, 7-9; Mark 13:9.

Yes, because of their determination to preach "this good news of the kingdom" earth wide under all circumstances, Jehovah's people have had to endure the additional trial of persecution—beatings, bans,

imprisonments, and other forms of mistreatment. (Matthew 24:14) Why, persecutors have even killed some Christians whose only "offense" was teaching that the Kingdom of God is the sole hope for mankind!

Jesus did say: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Mark 13:13) However, can we endure and not give out? Is there any source of comfort in even the greatest of adversity? Do we have examples of those who have endured?

How You Can Endure Adversity

"BY ENDURANCE on your part you will acquire your souls." Jesus Christ spoke those words when giving his prophecy concerning "the time of the end." (Luke 21:19; Daniel 12:4) In his statement, these two points stand out: (1) Endurance is essential to the saving of our life, and (2) it is possible to endure.

But how can you endure? To answer this question, we first need to know why Jehovah permits suffering and persecution to come upon his servants.

Suffering and Persecution—Why?

The prime reason is that Satan challenged the rightfulness and righteousness of Jehovah's sovereignty. (Genesis 3:1-19) Jehovah has arranged to meet this challenge for his own name's sake and for the sake of others.

God has also allowed his people to suffer for purposes that can prove to be very beneficial to us if we view such affliction in the right way. For example, if we endure when under trial without resentment toward our adversities, we are proving that our faith is genuine, the kind of faith that pleases God. (1 Peter 1:6, 7; Hebrews 11:6) But affliction can also show up such personality flaws as pride, impatience, and love of ease. With the help of God's spirit, we can work to overcome such traits and more fully 'clothe ourselves with the new personality.'—Colossians 3:9-14.

The psalmist expressed this point for us very well, saying: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, in order that I may learn your regulations." (Psalm 119:71) What a fine way to view affliction! No complaining or murmuring. No selfish concern for any personal loss that the affliction might have caused. Rather, here is wise realization that what Jehovah permitted to come upon the psalmist could help him to appreciate the regulations of Jehovah more fully. Do we allow suffering to have the same effect on us?

The apostle Paul benefited from the tribulation he experienced in the district of Asia. For one thing, this adversity made him depend more fully upon Jehovah. It also underlined the apostle's belief in the resurrection, for he endured his hardships with complete trust in "the God who raises up the dead." (2 Corinthians 1:8-10) Yes, Paul enjoyed benefits because of his endurance under suffering.

The same is true of those Christians who have the right view of affliction today. In Zimbabwe, a country once plagued with

guerrilla warfare, a congregation of Jehovah's people was moved into a protected village. Due to the wartime conditions, each of the three appointed elders in the congregation had lost a child in death. Moreover, the local people were putting great pressure on these Christian parents to compromise their faith by appeasing the spirits that were said to have been angered. How did the elders feel about this? Speaking for all three, one of them said: "While the nation is at war, we are also at war with the wicked spirits. We have an advantage over the enemy [wicked spirit forces] in that we have a hope, a living one. So, even if we die in the fight, as long as we die faithful to Jehovah, we shall be resurrected. We shall have conquered the enemy." These three faithful men never lost sight of Jehovah's power to deliver. Noting their firm stand, we, too, should be convinced that we can endure!

When Persecution Is Brutal

'But what if the persecution is brutal, with cruel methods of torture being used?' you may ask. 'Can we even then endure and not give out in our faith?' Well, early Christians were able to endure horrible treatment without compromising their faith.

Similarly, full faith in Jehovah was demonstrated by a present-day Christian living in an isolated rural area of Zimbabwe. He was alone on one occasion because his wife had gone to visit their married daughter. Suddenly, he was accosted by some armed men who made false accusations because of his Christian stand. After beating him severely, these men tied red-hot bricks between his legs and also made him walk on such bricks. Then he was left alone to die. Because the sudden change of conditions in the area had made travel impossible, the man's wife was not aware of her husband's plight. Neighbors were ordered on pain of death not to help him. So he remained alone in this condition for three whole months, daily expecting to die.

This suffering Christian man was able to sustain himself on supplies of water and maize meal at his home. But because of the mistreatment he had received, he could not walk. Therefore, when nearby firewood ran out, he had to break up his furniture and use this to make cooking fires. The water became rusty and full of worms. His burns continued to fester.

This was the brother's condition when his wife was finally able to return home three months later. Imagine how she felt upon seeing him! Immediately, she made preparations to get him to a hospital. To do this, she had to take him in a wheelbarrow to the nearest bus stop and from there get him to town where there was a hospital. Three weeks later, he was discharged from the hospital and went to the home of his daughter, where he received spiritual aid and encouragement from members of the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in that area.

What helped this loyal supporter of God's Kingdom to endure brutal treatment? For three months he was entirely on his own. He fully expected to die. And yet, when asked how he felt during this ordeal, his answer was, "I felt that Jehovah was with me all the time." There were no complaints against his persecutors or lamenting over what had happened to him —just firm conviction that Jehovah never forsakes his loyal servants.—Psalm 37:28.

Yes, Christians can endure. They know that if Jehovah allows tribulation, it is for a good purpose, and endurance is possible. God's Word and the experiences of others assure us of this fact. (Matthew 24:13) However, while enduring trials, we often need to be comforted, do we not? But where should we turn for such comfort?

Drawing Comfort From God's Word

JEHOVAH is "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation." (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4) Therefore, it is to him and his Word that we must turn to receive true comfort and solace in times of distress.—Romans 15:4.

If we are faithful to God, then he 'will by no means leave or forsake us.' Confidently, we can say: "Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5, 6; Psalm 37:39, 40; 145:20) Surely, therefore, we need not be depressed or discouraged, even when suffering great affliction.

As part of his great prophecy being fulfilled in our time, Jesus said: "You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death; and you will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name." But just after that Jesus added: "And yet not a hair of your heads will by any means perish." (Luke 21: 16-18) How could that be? Because of the resurrection, the very same hope that sustained Paul. (John 5:28, 29; 2 Corinthians 1:9, 10) Is it not comforting to know that even death itself cannot take away our wonderful hope for the future?

Think of the comfort that this hope and the assurances of God's help can bring to persecuted Christians enduring physical torture, to those crippled and maimed because of cruelties, to godly women who have been raped, to parents forcibly separated from their children. Yes, in Jehovah's Word we find many expressions of comfort and assurance that can even cause us to rejoice when under tribulation. —Matthew 5:10-12.

Keep in Mind the Reward

When experiencing adversity and affliction, remember that nothing is happening to us that has not happened to other faithful servants of Jehovah. We can resist the Devil's attempts to cause us to stop serving Jehovah if we do what the apostle Peter urged: "Take your stand against [the Devil], solid in the faith, knowing that the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the *entire association* of your brothers in the world." (1 Peter 5:9) Yes, other Christians endure similar trials for the sake of the good news and do so without compromising. We can do the same.

We should take note not only of those who stood firm but also of the rewards they received. To illustrate: Satan, bent on proving that Job served Jehovah only for selfish reasons, brought one calamity after another upon this man of God. First his animals were destroyed, then his servants, and finally even his ten children. Not satisfied with that, Satan struck Job with "a malignant boil from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." (Job, chapters 1 and 2) Did Job break his integrity to God because of these calamities?

No, he did not. But what about the reward? Well, Jehovah restored Job's health, gave him "in double amount" all

that had been his, and granted him an extended, satisfying life. (Job 42:10-17) In addition to these rewards, there is the far greater one of a resurrection with the prospect of everlasting life on a paradise earth. (Job 14:13-15) Surely, Job's experience gives comfort and strength to suffering Christians today.

"Jehovah Helps"

Now, consider the case of a Christian woman who endured many years of suffering in concentration camps in Germany during World War II. In addition to dreadful conditions, brutal persecution, and privations was a forced separation from her husband and child for five years, not knowing what was happening to them. Finally, after years of faithful endurance, she was reunited with her husband and child, and the three of them have been serving Jehovah faithfully ever since. Note her comments concerning her experience:

"My years in German concentration camps taught me an outstanding lesson. It is how greatly Jehovah's spirit can strengthen you when you are under extreme trial! Before I was arrested, I had read a sister's letter that said that under severe trial Jehovah's spirit causes a calmness to come over you. I thought that she must have been exaggerating a bit. But when I went through trials myself, I knew that what she had said was true. It really happens that way. It's hard to imagine it, if you have not experienced it. Yet it really happened to me. Jehovah helps."

Are you not comforted and strengthened by these expressions? Because of holding fast her integrity under trial, this Christian woman, along with her family, looks ahead to realizing her hope of everlasting life. (Hebrews 10:39) What a grand reward for faithfulness!

After experiencing trials for years, how did our beloved brother Paul feel? Discouraged? Downhearted? Depressed? Not at all! He was confident, hopeful, glad that he had endured. "I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith," said Paul. "From this time on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me as a reward in that day." (2 Timothy 4:7, 8) Paul held his course without wavering and has received his heavenly reward. (Philippians 3:4-14) Who is not comforted by such a fine example? May we similarly endure adversity, draw comfort from the Scriptures, and remain loyal to our loving God, Jehovah.

Job's experience gives strength to suffering Christians today

Jesus' Baptism

ABOUT six months after John begins preaching, Jesus, who is now 30 years old, comes to him at the Jordan. For what reason? To pay a social visit? Is Jesus simply interested in how John's work is progressing? No, Jesus asks John to baptize him.

Right away John objects. "I am the one needing to be baptized by you, and are you coming to me?" he asks. John knows that his cousin Jesus is God's special Son. Why, John had jumped with gladness in his mother's belly when Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visited them! John's mother Elizabeth no doubt later told him about this. And she would also have told him about the angel's announcement of Jesus' birth and about the appearance of angels to shepherds the night he was born.

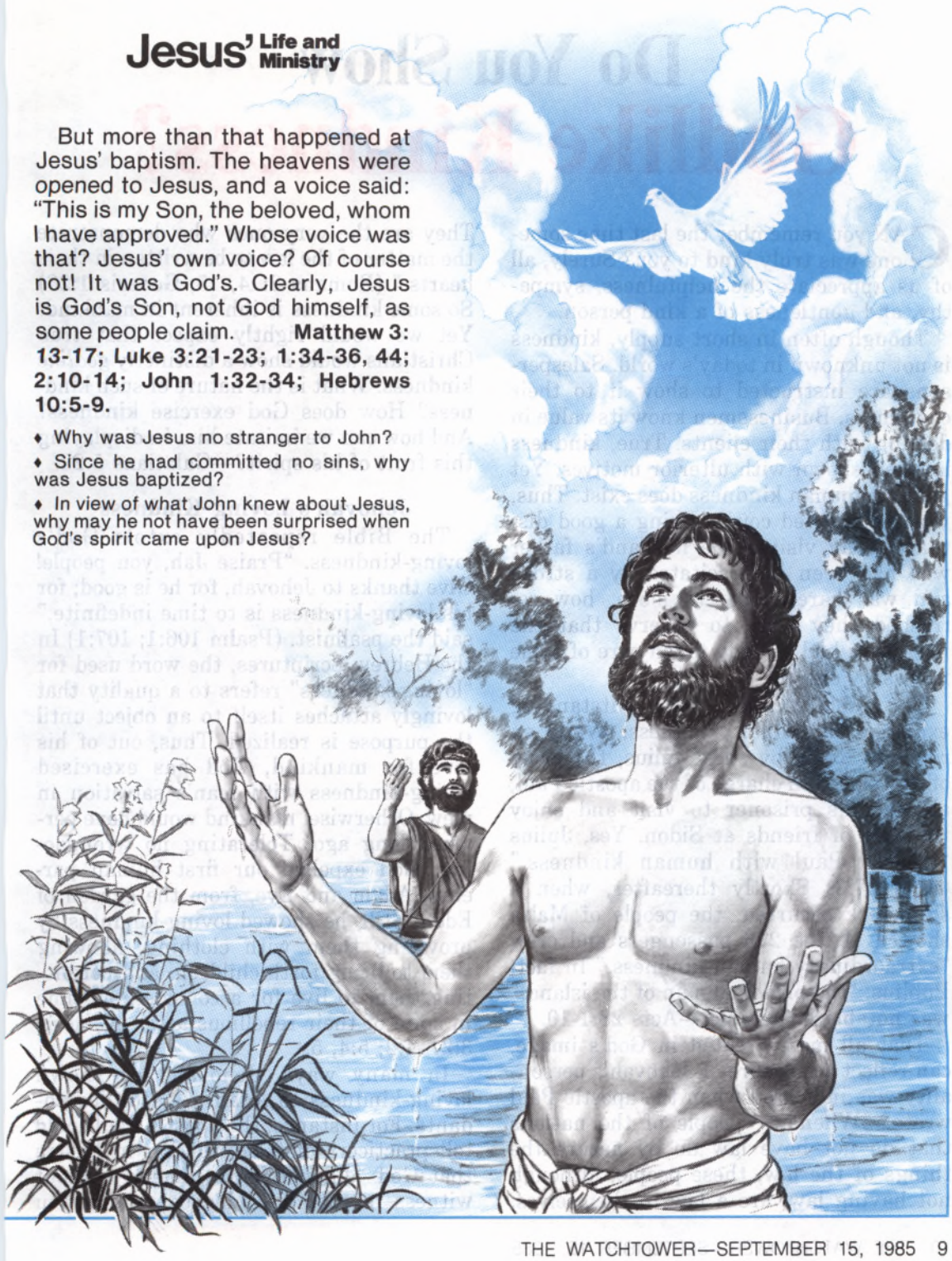
So Jesus is no stranger to John. And John knows that his baptism is not for Jesus. It is for those repenting of their sins, but Jesus is without sin. Yet, despite John's objection, Jesus insists: "Let it be, this time, for in that way it is suitable for us to carry out all that is righteous."

Why is it right for Jesus to be baptized? Because Jesus' baptism is a symbol, not of repentance for sins, but of his presenting himself to do the will of his Father. Jesus was a carpenter, but now the time has come for him to begin the ministry that God sent him to earth to perform. Do you think John expected anything unusual to happen when he baptized Jesus?

Well, John later reported: "The very One who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'Whoever it is upon whom you see the spirit coming down and remaining, this is the one that baptizes in holy spirit.'" So John was expecting God's spirit to come upon someone he baptized. Perhaps, therefore, he was not really surprised when, as Jesus came up from the water, 'God's spirit came upon him like a dove.'

But more than that happened at Jesus' baptism. The heavens were opened to Jesus, and a voice said: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." Whose voice was that? Jesus' own voice? Of course not! It was God's. Clearly, Jesus is God's Son, not God himself, as some people claim. **Matthew 3: 13-17; Luke 3:21-23; 1:34-36, 44; 2:10-14; John 1:32-34; Hebrews 10:5-9.**

- Why was Jesus no stranger to John?
- Since he had committed no sins, why was Jesus baptized?
- In view of what John knew about Jesus, why may he not have been surprised when God's spirit came upon Jesus?



Do You Show Godlike Kindness?

CAN you remember the last time someone was truly kind to you? Surely, all of us appreciate the helpfulness, sympathy, and gentleness of a kind person.

Though often in short supply, kindness is not unknown in today's world. Salespersons are instructed to show it to their customers. Businessmen know its value in dealing with their clients. True, kindness is often shown with ulterior motives. Yet genuine human kindness does exist. Thus, when a married couple living a good distance away visited the husband's father who had been incapacitated by a stroke and was barely able to move, how refreshed they were to observe that the neighbors had already taken care of some necessary chores!

The Bible contains some outstanding examples of human kindness. While en route to Rome by ship, Julius, the army officer placed in charge of the apostle Paul, allowed his prisoner to visit and enjoy the care of friends at Sidon. Yes, Julius "treated Paul with human kindness." (Acts 27:3) Shortly thereafter, when a shipwreck occurred, the people of Malta showed all the 276 passengers and crew "extraordinary human kindness." In fact, Publius, "the principal man of the island," was notably hospitable.—Acts 28:1-10.

That all men, created in God's image, can reflect a measure of Jehovah's personality was indicated when the apostle Paul wrote: "Whenever people of the nations 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." (Romans 2:14, 15; Genesis 1:26) So some kindness is inherent in mankind. Yet we would rightly expect that true Christians would show a distinctly *godlike* kindness. What is the nature of such kindness? How does God exercise kindness? And how can we imitate him in displaying this fruit of his spirit?—Galatians 5:22.

Jehovah's Loving-Kindness

The Bible repeatedly extols God's loving-kindness. "Praise Jah, you people! Give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good; for his loving-kindness is to time indefinite," said the psalmist. (Psalm 106:1; 107:1) In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word used for "loving-kindness" refers to a quality that lovingly attaches itself to an object until the purpose is realized. Thus, out of his love for mankind, God has exercised loving-kindness with man's salvation in view. Otherwise, mankind would have perished long ago. Tolerating no wrongdoing, God expelled our first human parents, Adam and Eve, from the garden of Eden. Still, he showed loving-kindness by providing them with clothing, allowing them to bring forth children, and permitting them to live for a considerable time in spite of their rebellious acts.—Genesis 3:21–4:2; 5:4, 5.

In many ways, Jehovah has shown loving-kindness to Adam's sinful descendants. For instance, the apostle Paul could tell practicers of false religion in Lystra that God "did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you

rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." (Acts 14:16, 17) Even though their worship was directed to a false god, Jehovah kindly provided for them richly in a material way.

Of much greater significance, however, was the loving-kindness God showed toward Adam's yet-unborn offspring. Through the promised "seed," Jehovah provided hope of deliverance from human sin and death. (Genesis 3:15; Romans 5:12) In spite of mankind's God-dishonoring record, God did not abandon mankind. Why, he even gave his most beloved and only-begotten Son as a ransom sacrifice in their behalf! (John 3:16) And in a further manifestation of "undeserved kindness," God has also arranged for some integrity-keeping humans to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ in the heavenly Kingdom that will bless all obedient mankind.—Romans 5:8, 15-17; 8:16, 17; Revelation 14:1-4.

Showing Godlike Kindness

How can imperfect humans show godlike kindness? Well, Jesus provided an example and guidelines that can help us to exercise such kindness. (1 Peter 2:21; Matthew 11:28-30) For instance, he indicated that we should be kind even to our enemies. Jesus said: "Continue to love your enemies and to do good and to lend without interest, not hoping for anything back; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind toward the unthankful and wicked." (Luke 6:35) So if we would show the superior quality of godlike kindness, we will be kind not only to family members, friends, and Christian brothers but also to those who are unthankful and have shown themselves to be our enemies. This is not done to irritate them but to help them and to bring out the best in them.—Galatians 6:10; Romans 12:20, 21.

Since our human inclination is to treat others as they treat us, we do well to remember Jehovah's reminder: "In loving-kindness I have taken delight, and not in sacrifice." (Hosea 6:6) Thus, if we wish to have Jehovah's favor, we must endeavor to display godlike kindness, or loving-kindness, in *all* our dealings with others. (Compare Micah 6:8.) But to demonstrate this godly quality, we need to imitate Jehovah in a specific way. What is that? Well, just as he kindly took the first steps to put us in good standing with him, so we should take the initiative in sharing Bible truths with others. Even if rebuffed at first, we must still exercise loving-kindness by endeavoring repeatedly to reach their hearts with the good news of God's Kingdom. How fine it is when this display of godlike kindness helps others to get on the road to life!—Matthew 7:13, 14.

How to Cultivate It

Cultivating godlike kindness is possible only by learning and acting in harmony with God's thoughts as expressed in the Bible. Yes, we must first gain an accurate knowledge of the truth. Paul commended Christians at Colossae and acknowledged that the truth had borne fruitage "from the day [they] heard and accurately knew the undeserved kindness of God in truth." (Colossians 1:5, 6) Yet, no Christian gets to the point where further progress cannot be made. Therefore, each one of us must "go on growing in the undeserved kindness and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 3:18.

Since kindness is part of the fruitage of God's holy spirit, Christians submitting to the influence of that spirit will be kind. In fact, Paul specifically connects godlike holiness with kindness, saying: "As God's chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with the tender affections of com-

passion, kindness." (Colossians 3:12) So we must have God's holy spirit in order to display godlike kindness.

But how do we get Jehovah's spirit? By asking him for it—repeatedly. Jesus showed that if we humbly supplicate Jehovah for this precious gift, our heartfelt request will be granted. After mentioning the need to "keep on asking" and to "keep on seeking," Jesus said: "Therefore, if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!" (Luke 11:9-13) Indeed, by requesting Jehovah's spirit and specifically asking for his help in displaying greater kindness, we are assured of a favorable answer. (1 John 5: 14, 15) Of course, our actions need to be consistent with our request for God's spirit.

Another aid in cultivating this quality is meditating on the expressions of Jehovah's kindness that we can observe around us. Concerning God, the psalmist said: "I shall certainly meditate on all your activity, and with your dealings I will concern myself." (Psalm 77:12) We do well to take note of and reflect on God's qualities as observed in everyday life. The beauties of creation, the delights of food and drink, the items we need for our comfort and pleasure, the joy that children bring —even the antics of animals—all bespeak God's kindness to mankind. Yes, a beautiful sunset, a colorful rainbow, a fine meal, or a treasured friendship can well remind us that God kindly provides many things for our enjoyment. Truly, "his invisible qualities [including kindness] are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made." (Romans 1:20) Meditation on such things is vital if we truly wish to imitate our great God of kindness.

Make It a Goal

It certainly is worth while to make it our goal to develop the quality of godlike kindness. Personal and family relationships are bound to improve where kindness is displayed. Kindness also attracts people to the Kingdom message. Many a skeptic has been moved to examine the truth because of the kindness shown by Jehovah's Witnesses in the ministry. Yes, kindness has brought out the best in those who might otherwise be hostile.

In the door-to-door ministry, one young Witness met a woman who curtly rebuffed her. Noting that the woman was ill, the sister asked if she could do anything for her. The woman coolly refused any assistance. But two weeks later the young sister stopped by to see the woman again and asked if she had been able to do any shopping for food since they had met. Since the woman had not been able to get food into her home, the sister insisted on going to the store for the needed items. Thereafter, this woman was much more cordial to Witnesses calling at her door—all of this because the sister had shown godlike kindness.

This most desirable quality has drawing power. Illustrating this are the observations of a young college graduate after going to the Kingdom Hall for the first time. At the hall, the Witnesses from humble backgrounds were concerned about how this woman would respond to them and their speech. But this educated woman did not recall failings they may have had. Rather, she remembered only that everyone was so kind to her, and she was impressed with the genuine interest they took in her. Moved by their example, she dedicated her life to God. Soon she was showing selfless interest in others as a regular pioneer and later as a member of the Bethel family.

Truly, godlike kindness is a most desirable quality. It is one that should be evident in all our dealings. Do you show it?

Insight on the News

Southern Baptist "Showdown"

Excitement ran high at a religious gathering in the Dallas Convention Center in June. Over 45,000 Baptist delegates met for what *The New York Times Magazine* called "a showdown between the fundamentalists and the more moderate factions for control of the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention," the largest Protestant denomination in the United States. In the end, the fundamentalist incumbent, Charles Stanley, was elected over his more moderate rival, Winfred Moore. But the convention did little to quell the discord between church members.

While Southern Baptists believe that the Bible is inspired, the more moderate among them, whom fundamentalists call liberals, do not believe that the Scriptures are necessarily inerrant. The fundamentalists fear that the moderates are compromising traditional Baptist theology. On the other hand, the moderates resent the fact that their fundamentalist brothers do not adhere to a strict separation of Church and State but involve themselves in politics, as in lobbying for school prayer and for a ban on abortions. The differences between these factions are nowhere near being resolved. Thus the situation does not harmonize with the apostle Paul's exhortation that true Christians "speak in agreement" and "be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought."—1 Corinthians 1:10.

Sports Violence

"Europe's soccer stadiums are increasingly coming to resemble gladiator pits." So observed *Time* magazine in a report on the tragic violence involving British and Italian soccer fans that resulted in 38 deaths at the European Cup finals in Brussels last May. Violence by fans is a growing problem in other parts of the world too. During May, Chinese fans in Peking rioted—smashing buses, overturning cars, and menacing foreigners—when their soccer team was eliminated from World Cup contention by Hong Kong.

Why do sports fans lose control? Authorities say it is because many sports enthusiasts are poor, bored, and ill-equipped to deal with defeat or humiliation. "But social class or economic considerations are not the main roots," says Dr. Jeffrey H. Goldstein, an expert on sports-related violence. "It's nationalism pure and simple. In an era of instant communications, people increasingly are making nationalist issues of international sporting events, and the people are abetted by the actions of the press, sports officials, politicians and the athletes themselves." Goldstein adds that to fans "international sporting events have become tests of the rightness or wrongness of ideology."

Although nationalism may spur many sports fans to violence, true Christians are neutral, peace-loving advocates of God's Kingdom. Moreover, they avoid getting caught up in the worldly competitive spirit.—John 17:16; Romans 12:18; Galatians 5:26.

Not 'Sticking to Their Role'

"One of the curious things about our very verbal political bishops is that they appear to have absolutely no sense of Christian priorities," writes columnist Paul Johnson in *The Daily Telegraph* of London. Church bishops spend too much time with political matters, he says, and ignore a far more significant problem. Says Johnson: "In both the United States and Britain, the biggest single cause of poverty is the one-parent family," often resulting from teenage immorality. "Yet oddly enough it is a long time since I have heard any clergyman, let alone a bishop, preach a sermon on the evils of fornication." If bishops "would only stick to their fundamental and traditional role as custodians of morality," he concludes, they could "have an important part to play in reducing economic hardship."

Johnson's comments bring to mind a situation in ancient Israel. Religious leaders at that time also failed to teach God's Word so that the people might "turn back from their bad way." Of such men, God said: "I am against the prophets, . . . the ones who are stealing away my words, each one from his companion." (Jeremiah 23:22, 30) Likewise, modern-day clergymen who fail to teach proper Christian morals, perhaps even misapplying Bible texts for political or other reasons, can expect to earn God's disfavor.—Compare Luke 11:52.

Ministerial Servants
A Blessing to Jehovah's People

"Let these be tested as to fitness first, then let them serve as ministers, as they are free from accusation."—1 TIMOTHY 3:10.

JEHOVAH is "the happy God," and he wants his servants to be happy. (1 Timothy 1:11) To that end, he has provided elders and ministerial servants for the blessing of his people. These responsible men serve beneficial purposes and help to ensure the happiness, unity, and smooth operation of the Christian congregation. How grateful Jehovah's Witnesses are for the loving and helpful service rendered by these appointees within God's theocratic organization!

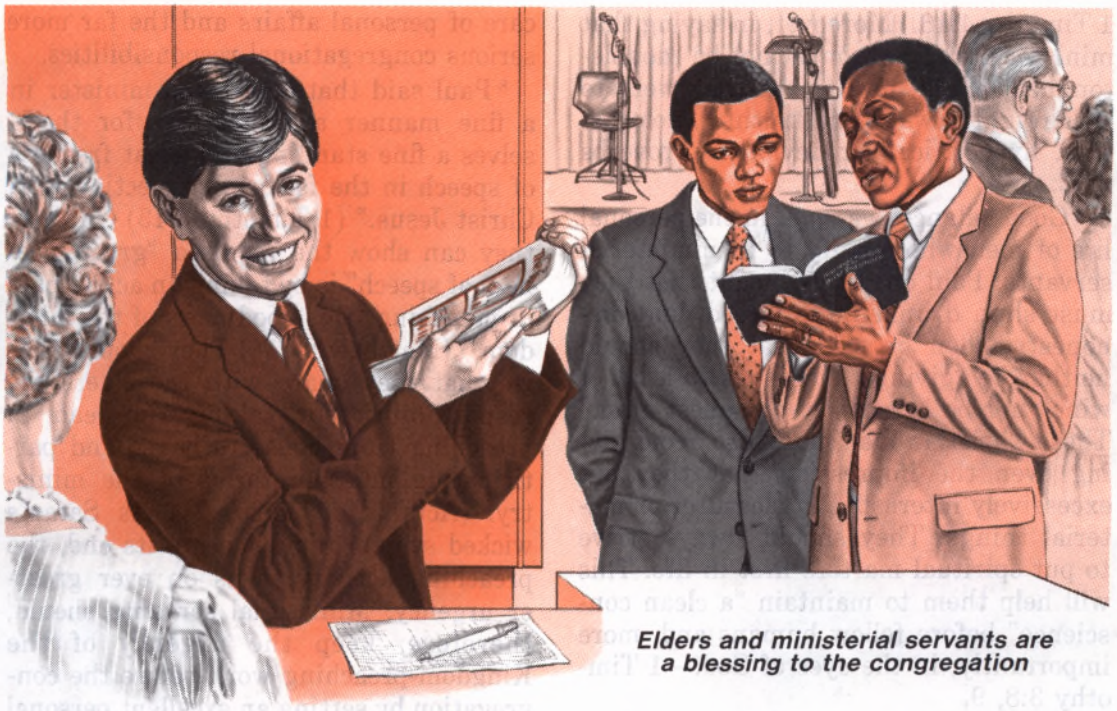
[2] Despite the vital contribution elders and ministerial servants make to the congregation, however, they are not to magnify their own importance. They must remember that Jesus Christ admonished his followers to be humble. He once told them: "Whoever will humble himself like this young child is the one that is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 18:4) And the disciple James wrote: "Humble yourselves in the eyes of Jehovah, and he will exalt you." (James 4:10; Romans 12:3) But having a humble attitude does not require that these men downplay the importance of their work as elders and ministerial servants. They can be humble and still take the lead in the service activities. Never should they lose sight of the beneficial purposes served by their activity, but they should always remember their obligation, both to Jehovah and to their Christian brothers, to do the best they can in fulfilling their duties.

[3] United activity among Jehovah's Witnesses today can be compared to the unity in the human body. In fact, the apostle Paul likened the spiritual body of Christ to the human body made up of many members. Yet for mutual benefit, all members of the body work together. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31) And, surely, appointed elders and ministerial servants are a blessing to Jehovah's people, for these men further the unified operation of the Christian congregation today. (Compare Colossians 2: 18, 19.) Dedicated male members of the congregation who strive to support Jehovah's organizational arrangement by "reaching out for an office of overseer" are making a vital contribution to Christian unity and the advancement of Kingdom interests. (1 Timothy 3:1) But how does a Christian man qualify, in the first place, to become a ministerial servant?

"Tested as to Fitness First"

[4] The apostle Paul told his co-worker Timothy what was required before men

1. Who help to ensure congregational happiness and unity?
2. What attitude should elders and ministerial servants have, but of what should they never lose sight?
3. United activity among Jehovah's Witnesses can be compared to what, and how can dedicated men promote such unity and the advancement of Kingdom interests?
4. (a) Why should prospective ministerial servants be "tested as to fitness first"? (b) These men should be willing to do what?



Elders and ministerial servants are a blessing to the congregation

could be appointed as ministerial servants. Among other things, Paul wrote: "Let these be tested as to fitness first, then let them serve as ministers, as they are free from accusation." (1 Timothy 3:10) This would prevent the appointing of unqualified men, those not meeting certain basic Scriptural requirements. It would also allow time to determine the motives of prospective ministerial servants. Surely, these men should not be motivated by a desire to gain prestige, for that would indicate a lack of humility. Rather, in recognition of the fact that a Christian's dedication to God is unconditional and all embracing, a brother should be willing to serve in any capacity in which Jehovah sees fit to use him in His organization. Yes, prospective ministerial servants should be as willing to serve as was faithful Isaiah, who said: "Here I am! Send me."—Isaiah 6:8.

5 "Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, not double-tongued, not giving themselves to a lot of wine, not greedy of dishonest gain," Paul explained. (1 Timothy 3:8) Although some ministerial servants may be comparatively young, they are not youths and must be "serious." They must have learned to view important matters seriously. (Compare Proverbs 22:15.) They must be reliable and conscientious, not men inclined to take responsibility lightly. Indeed, they should be dependable, taking their duties seriously. After all, what could be of more serious concern than sacred service to Jehovah? It is a matter of life and death —for them and for others. (Compare

5. (a) What requirements for ministerial servants are set out at 1 Timothy 3:8? (b) What does it mean to be "serious"? (c) Paul meant what in saying that ministerial servants must not be "double-tongued"?

1 Timothy 4:16.) Moreover, in saying that ministerial servants must not be "double-tongued," Paul meant that they were to be straightforward and truthful, not gossipy, hypocritical, or devious.—Proverbs 3:32.

[6] Good balance is a *must* in the personal life of men who qualify to be ministerial servants. Paul obviously meant that they must shun drunkenness, greed, and dishonesty when he said that they should neither be "giving themselves to a lot of wine" nor be "greedy of dishonest gain." These Christian men must also avoid giving even the impression that they are excessively interested in pleasures or material things. They should always strive to put spiritual matters first in life. This will help them to maintain "a clean conscience" before fellow humans and, more importantly, in the eyes of God.—1 Timothy 3:8, 9.

[7] The heavy responsibilities falling upon ministerial servants are not intended for youngsters. These men are spoken of in Scripture as being of such an age that they could be married and have a family. Under those circumstances, they would have to be "presiding in a fine manner over children and their own households." (1 Timothy 3:12) Does this mean that a young man would not become eligible to be a ministerial servant until he had first married and raised a family? No, not at all. In fact, his reluctance to rush into marriage without ample preparation or before finding a suitable baptized Christian partner may reveal a degree of maturity needed to take proper care of personal affairs and the far more serious congregational responsibilities.

[8] Paul said that "men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 3:13) One way they can show the required "great freeness of speech" is by taking an active part in preaching "this good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) They should realize that they share with the elders the responsibility for taking the lead in preaching from house to house and participating in other forms of the ministry. (Acts 5:42; 20:20, 21) As Satan's wicked system rapidly nears its end, the preaching activity takes on ever greater urgency. Ministerial servants should, therefore, keep the urgency of the Kingdom-preaching work before the congregation by setting an excellent personal example in the field ministry.

Helped by the Full-Time Ministry

[9] In view of the urgency of our critical times, many Christian men and women have taken up the full-time ministry. Many, called pioneers, daily spend an average of between two and five hours in the preaching work, some of them as missionaries in foreign lands. Others serve full time at the Watch Tower Society's headquarters or in its branch offices around the earth. Their service is a source of joy and satisfaction to them and to those they serve. And in many cases experience in full-time service has helped men to develop the qualifications needed

6. What are some ways in which ministerial servants should manifest balance?
7. (a) Why can it be said that the responsibilities of ministerial servants are not intended for youngsters? (b) The fact of a ministerial servant's being single may reveal what about him?
8. In connection with 1 Timothy 3:13 and Matthew 24:14, what responsibility rests upon ministerial servants?
9. In view of the urgency of our times, what service have many Christians taken up?

to serve the congregation beneficially as ministerial servants.

[10] One former ministerial servant, now an elder in a Berlin, Germany, congregation, says of the pioneer work he took up years ago as a young man: "I can say that it was a step I have never regretted. Jehovah has blessed me. My relationship with him has become more intimate." Yes, like thousands of others, this brother discovered that the full-time ministry can deepen a person's relationship with Jehovah and speed up progress toward Christian maturity.

[11] Another longtime pioneer explains how the full-time service helped him. "I quieted down and became more balanced as regards making hasty judgments," he says. "I was happier and became more flexible in dealing with different kinds of people." Are these not among the qualities needed by men desiring to serve as ministerial servants?

[12] Participating in the full-time ministry, if Scriptural responsibilities permit, can serve as a marvelous opportunity for Christian men to be "tested as to fitness first." Some can take up such ministry on a permanent basis, others from time to time. Younger people might do so during school vacations, and older ones during vacation periods or at other appropriate times throughout the year. Of course, participating in the full-time service calls for balance and careful planning. These abilities are needed by a ministerial servant and will help him to fulfill his duties. What duties?

10, 11. As indicated by personal expressions cited here, how may men desiring to be ministerial servants be benefited by full-time service?

12. (a) What opportunities are there to participate in the full-time ministry? (b) Participating in the full-time ministry calls for what abilities that would help a ministerial servant fulfill his duties?

Pioneer service is excellent training for those desiring to become ministerial servants or elders

Duties of Ministerial Servants

[13] Although Acts 6:1-6 does not directly apply to the appointing of ministerial servants, what is said there does suggest the type of work or the nature of duties that normally would be assigned to ministerial servants. Not by instructing fellow believers but by distributing food, the "seven certified men" then chosen freed the apostles to 'devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' By caring for similar duties today, ministerial servants provide the elders with more time for shepherding and teaching "the flock of God." —1 Peter 5:2, 3.

[14] Regarding the duties of ministerial servants, the book *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry* states: "One ministeri-

13. Acts 6:1-6 suggests what as to the type of work assigned to ministerial servants?

14. What varied duties may be assigned to ministerial servants?

al servant may be assigned to take care of the congregation literature, making it convenient for all of us to obtain the literature we need for our personal use and for field service. Another may care for the magazines in the congregation. Others are assigned duties to keep records such as for the congregation accounts or for the assigning of territory, or they are used to handle microphones, operate sound equipment, look after the platform or perhaps help the elders in other ways. There is much work to be done in maintaining the Kingdom Hall and keeping it clean, so ministerial servants are often called upon to assist in caring for such responsibilities. Ministerial servants are also assigned to serve as attendants, welcome new ones and help maintain order at congregation meetings."—Pages 57-8.

15 Could just any brother with practical ability perform such work? No, for the "certified men" chosen in first-century Jerusalem were "full of spirit and wisdom," or were "both practical and spiritually-minded." (Acts 6:3, *Phillips*) Even if they were already older men among Jehovah's people, they were assigned work similar to that now done by ministerial servants. So if present-day ministerial servants are to fulfill their duties effectively, they must be "both practical and spiritually-minded." While they are occupied with organizational details, their chief interest should be in serving *people* in spiritually beneficial ways.

16 Since ministerial servants must be spiritually minded, at times they can be used for work normally done by elders. *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry* (pages 58-9) explains: "If there are not enough elders to conduct the Congregation Book Studies, some of the more qualified ministerial servants are used as study conductors to care for assigned groups. They may be assigned to handle parts in the Service Meeting and the Theocratic Ministry School and to deliver public talks in the local congregation. Other privileges may be extended to some of the ministerial servants where there is particular need and they meet the requirements for the assignment.—Compare 1 Peter 4:10."

17 One of the "seven certified men" of Bible times was "Stephen, a man full of faith and holy spirit." (Acts 6:5) Before dying as a faithful martyr, Stephen gave a stirring testimony before the Jewish Sanhedrin. Read the account, and you will be convinced that he was spiritually minded, an outstanding witness receptive to the guidance of God's holy spirit and willing to give his life in Jehovah's service. (Acts 6:8–7:60) If you are a ministerial servant, do you take your congregational duties and field ministry as seriously as Stephen obviously took his responsibilities and his privilege to speak the truth?

How Are They Measuring Up?

18 Many ministerial servants are setting a fine example in Christian living, are caring for their congregational responsibilities very well, and are taking a good lead in the field ministry. Their work is greatly appreciated by fellow worshipers and will not be left unrewarded by Jehovah, for Hebrew Christians were assured: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his

15. (a) To serve effectively as a ministerial servant, what is needed besides practical ability? (b) Although ministerial servants look after various things, what should be their chief concern?
16. If there are not enough elders in a congregation, ministerial servants may be assigned what duties?
17. What kind of man was Stephen, and what question does this raise concerning ministerial servants?
18. What can be said about the work of many ministerial servants, and of what can they be assured?

name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering."—Hebrews 6:10.

[19] However, each ministerial servant might well ask himself: How am I measuring up to Scriptural requirements? Do I really contribute to the unity of the congregation? Am I caring for my assigned duties properly and industriously? And am I setting a good example in the field ministry? Some ministerial servants have met with problems in measuring up to what is required of them. So let us discuss some of these problems. Doing so can help each ministerial servant to "prove what his own work is." (Galatians 6:4) It should also increase the appreciation others have for the labors of love performed by these men who serve beneficial purposes among Jehovah's Witnesses and are a real blessing to God's people.

19. (a) What questions might each ministerial servant ask himself? (b) Why will it be beneficial to discuss problems experienced by some ministerial servants?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ How are ministerial servants a blessing to Jehovah's people?
- ☐ How can the full-time ministry help brothers who want to become ministerial servants?
- ☐ Why must ministerial servants be "both practical and spiritually-minded"?
- ☐ How was faithful Stephen a fine example for ministerial servants today?

Ministerial Servants *Maintain a Fine Standing!*

"The men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus."—1 TIMOTHY 3:13.

MEN who now are ministerial servants have been "tested as to fitness first." (1 Timothy 3:10) But their appointment was not an end in itself. Their goal is to go on "acquiring for themselves a fine standing" by carrying out their duties in "a fine manner." (1 Timothy 3:13) Each member of the united Christian congregation will want to support them in achieving this goal.

[2] The apostle Paul indicated that all members of the spiritual body of Christ benefit by working together and caring for

1. After his appointment as a ministerial servant, what should be a man's goal, and what should others in the congregation want to do?

2. How are members of the congregation affected by what is done by ministerial servants?

Ministerial servants must faithfully discharge their responsibilities in the disciple-making work and within the congregation

one another. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31) Similarly, when ministerial servants do their God-given work in "a fine manner," every member of the present-day Christian congregation is benefited. But when ministerial servants encounter problems that hinder them from fulfilling their duties properly, this may work a hardship on all members of the congregation.

[3] All of Jehovah's people have the same fight, "a wrestling, not against blood and flesh, but . . . against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) Additionally, all of Jehovah's servants have a fight against their own imperfections and sinful tendencies. As a group, however, ministerial servants are faced with certain problems in a more pronounced way than are other groups of Jehovah's Witnesses. Helpful in illustrating this is a recent survey of over 320 congregations with 1,360 ministerial servants in one western European country.

3. (a) What problems are common to all of Jehovah's people? (b) What does a recent survey help to illustrate?

Singleness and Marriage

[4] Of the ministerial servants surveyed, slightly over 10 percent are still single. They thus enjoy freedom from certain responsibilities common to the nearly 90 percent who are married. But single brothers must be careful not to use this freedom simply in the pursuit of such personal things as excessive recreation or socializing. Nor should they allow the natural desire for marriage to take priority over everything else in life. (Matthew 6:33) Neither should they allow pressure from their married friends to force them into a hasty or unwise marriage. And, surely, Christians who care for one anoth-

4. How should unmarried ministerial servants view their singleness, and what encouragement can others give them?

er will respect the single status of unmarried fellow believers and will encourage them to take advantage of their greater freedom to devote more time to theocratic pursuits, possibly by taking up the full-time ministry.

[5] According to the aforementioned survey, about 62 percent of the ministerial servants are parents. For them, the danger of their hearts getting "weighed down" with the "anxieties of life" is greater than it is for single brothers. (Luke 21: 34-36) Thus, in recommending singleness, Paul said: "I want you to be free from anxiety. The unmarried man is anxious for the things of the Lord, how he may gain the Lord's approval. But the married man is anxious for the things of the world, how he may gain the approval of his wife, and he is divided. . . . He also that gives his virginity in marriage does well, but he that does not give it in marriage will do better."—1 Corinthians 7:32-38.

[6] Although Jehovah's people do not believe that 'marriages are made in heaven,' they know that heavenly wisdom is needed to solve marital problems. (Psalm 19:7; Proverbs 3:5, 6) Hence, married ministerial servants need to follow the counsel of God's Word as closely as possible. They must strive for proper balance in fulfilling family responsibilities, and yet never use these as an excuse for neglecting their theocratic duties in the congregation. Among other things, a well-thought-out schedule is essential. Older and more experienced married couples may be able to offer younger ones helpful suggestions in this regard when called upon to do so.

5. What greater danger exists for married ministerial servants than for those who are single?
6. Married ministerial servants need to do what, and who may be able to offer helpful suggestions?

[7] Support from his family is of great help to a married ministerial servant. Of course, family members who place excessive demands on his time and attention or are overly demanding in material ways can hinder his spiritual progress. But it is a blessing when his entire family supports his efforts to "minister in a fine manner." (1 Timothy 3:13) So how vital it is that *before* an unmarried ministerial servant becomes emotionally involved with a prospective marriage mate he try to determine whether she is likely to promote their spiritual progress!

Employment and Materialism

[8] Eight out of every ten ministerial servants surveyed were under the age of 60. So in most cases they still do secular work to support themselves and their families. Nearly five of every ten of them are between 20 and 40 years of age—when men of the world normally get established in a job or career and strive to get ahead and become financially secure. If you are a ministerial servant in that age bracket, never underestimate the danger of developing worldly, materialistic attitudes that can weaken you spiritually. Rather, remember that Paul said: "Having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." (1 Timothy 6:8) Jesus, too, gave fine counsel that can help all of us to combat materialism. Read it for yourself at Matthew 6:19-34.

[9] You younger ministerial servants in

7. (a) How might the family of a married ministerial servant affect his efforts and spiritual progress? (b) Ministerial servants planning to get married would do well to keep what in mind?
8. (a) What possible danger do some ministerial servants face in connection with secular employment? (b) Meditation on what scriptures can help a person to combat materialism?
9. In harmony with Matthew 16:26, what is the course of wisdom for younger ministerial servants in particular?

particular, look at the "successful" men pursuing worldly careers or amassing wealth but leaving Jehovah out of their plans. (Compare Proverbs 16:3; 19:21.) Just how wise would it be to pattern yourselves after any unspiritual, materialistic individuals whose lives will soon be snuffed out during the "great tribulation"? (Matthew 24:21) What servant of Jehovah would trade places with them? "For," said Jesus, "what benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 16:26) Surely, the course of wisdom is to build a secure future with Jehovah's organization rather than a very insecure and *short one* with this dying world that is lying in Satan's power.—1 John 5:19.

Allegiance to God's Kingdom

10 Prophetically, it was said of Jehovah's Messianic King: "Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your military force. In the splendors of holiness, from the womb of the dawn, you have your company of young men just like dewdrops." (Psalm 110:3) This prophecy has been undergoing fulfillment since 1914, and those of the increasing "company of young men" realize that their first allegiance must be to God's Kingdom with the glorified Jesus Christ as King. So while these dedicated men, including ministerial servants, are in relative subjection to governmental "superior authorities," in any conflict of interests they "must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Romans 13:1; Acts 5:29) As Jesus said, his followers are "no part of the world." (John 15: 19; 18:36) They remain neutral as to the political affairs of the nations, realizing that doing otherwise would make them traitors to God's Kingdom.

10. As regards political affairs, what position is taken by the increasing "company of young men," including ministerial servants?

11 What if ministerial servants or others lose their employment or even their freedom because of maintaining Christian neutrality? (Isaiah 2:2-4; John 17:16) Then they know that their spiritual brothers and sisters will give them all the support possible spiritually, and, if necessary, materially. This is so because Jehovah's people lovingly care for one another. —Compare John 13:34, 35; 1 Corinthians 12:24, 25.

A Need for Greater Experience

12 Approximately one third of the ministerial servants surveyed have been Jehovah's Witnesses less than ten years. Obviously, these men have accepted the help and guidance of the more experienced members of the congregation. But 'acquiring a fine standing' would involve continuing to learn from others and gathering experience. It would also mean constantly setting personal goals and conscientiously striving to reach them. So if you earnestly desire to serve beneficial purposes as a ministerial servant or are reaching out for that privilege, have you set some personal goals? For example, why not decide to read through the entire Bible by a particular date or to be an auxiliary pioneer during certain months?

13 If you are young in years or experience, you can benefit from what is said at 1 Timothy 4:12-15. Although those words were directed to the young *overseer* Timothy, much of what Paul said there about speech and conduct would benefit any brother desiring to become a ministerial servant or who already serves in that ca-

11. Brothers who suffer because of maintaining Christian neutrality can be certain of what?
12. 'Acquiring a fine standing' would include what?
13. What counsel given to Timothy would benefit a brother who wishes to become a ministerial servant or who now serves in that capacity?

Older ministerial servants can do much to help and encourage the congregation

pacity. The apostle wrote: "Let no man ever look down on your youth. On the contrary, become an example to the faithful ones in speaking, in conduct, in love, in faith, in chasteness. While I am coming, continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not be neglecting the gift in you that was given you through a prediction and when the body of older men laid their hands upon you. Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons." On what do you particularly need to work so that "*your* advancement may be manifest to all persons"? Prayerfully determine what you need to do, and then do it with Jehovah's help!

Coping With Discouragement

[14] A great many ministerial servants no longer have to contend with problems unique to young men. They face advanced age or poor health, which can lead to discouragement. But those keeping strong spiritually can draw comfort from these words of Paul to fellow anointed Christians: "We do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day. For though the tribulation is momentary and light, it works out for us a glory that is of more and more surpassing weight and is everlasting; while we keep our eyes, not on the things seen, but on the things unseen. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting." (2 Corinthians 4:16-18) Jehovah's servants with earthly hopes also have very encouraging prospects—those of eternal life in an earthly paradise.—Luke 23:43; John 17:3.

[15] So those ministerial servants who are unable to do as much as others because of poor health or advanced age have good reason to maintain a joyful and positive attitude. This mirrors appreciation for the truth and deep faith in things that are

14, 15. (a) What Scriptural encouragement is there for ministerial servants who must contend with advanced age or poor health? (b) How can these men encourage others in the congregation?

everlasting. Such a fine spirit, coupled with humble service, will be of great benefit and encouragement to everyone in the congregation.

[16] If you are a ministerial servant, continue "reaching out for an office of overseer" by improving your teaching ability and spiritual qualities. (1 Timothy 3:1) But do not be discouraged if you are not quickly appointed as an elder. Remember that as a ministerial servant caring for your duties "in a fine manner" you are serving beneficial purposes and are a real asset to the congregation. It is a great privilege to serve in any way within Jehovah's organization and to help fellow believers carry out the Kingdom-preaching commission.—Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

How Others Can Help

[17] Realizing the beneficial purposes served by ministerial servants, all of Jehovah's people should want to support their efforts. For example, it will be easier for such a man to continue 'ministering in a fine manner' if his wife and children are content with the necessities of life and do not demand many luxuries that would require that he spend extra effort in secular work.—1 Timothy 6:6-8.

[18] Elders can help ministerial servants by giving them any needed direction and counsel. And when improvement has been made, sincere commendation should be offered. Among other things, elders can accompany ministerial servants in the field ministry, assist them in preparing talks, and share with them their wealth of Christian experience. Apparently such interest and communication have sometimes been neglected. For example, when asked about his low field service report, one ministerial servant told a circuit overseer: "Why do you ask? It has been low for years, but you are the first one ever to say anything about it." Elders who offer ministerial servants constructive, loving counsel and patiently help them with their problems often have the joy of seeing outstanding results.

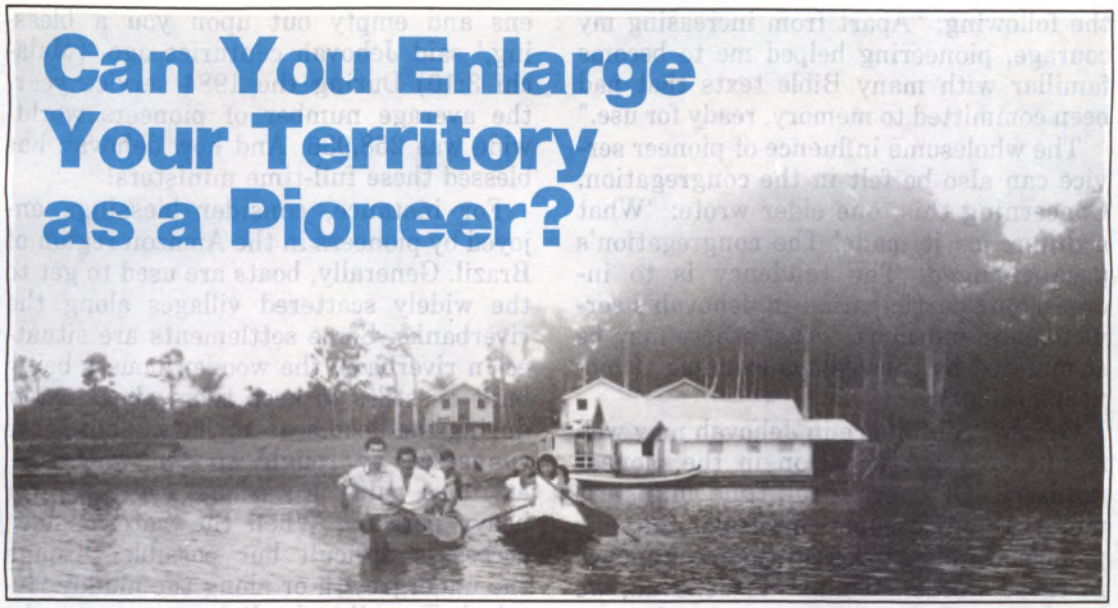
[19] Actually, each member of the congregation can help the ministerial servants to maintain their fine standing. How? By cooperating with them and by showing heartfelt appreciation for their work. Even as all parts of the human body normally work together to maintain physical health, so all members of the congregation must cooperate to assure its good spiritual health. (Compare 1 Corinthians 12: 24, 25.) To that end, much is being done by hardworking ministerial servants who serve beneficial purposes and maintain a fine standing. May they, and all of Jehovah's loyal witnesses, look to a future of eternal happiness and unitedly continue to make the heart of "the happy God" rejoice.—1 Timothy 1:11; Proverbs 27:11.

16. Why should a ministerial servant not be discouraged if he is not appointed an elder?
17. How can a ministerial servant be helped by his wife and children?
18. (a) How can elders help ministerial servants? (b) Why is good communication vital between elders and ministerial servants?
19. How can each member of the congregation help the ministerial servants to maintain their fine standing?

Please Explain

- What problems may be faced by ministerial servants?
- What can the wives and children of ministerial servants do to help them?
- What can elders do to assist ministerial servants?
- What can each member of the congregation do to help ministerial servants?

Can You Enlarge Your Territory as a Pioneer?



JESUS CHRIST once said: "Also to other cities I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth." (Luke 4:43) Without question, Jesus was the foremost Kingdom proclaimer, a true pioneer in the sacred service of Jehovah.

Like Jesus, the apostle Paul was a full-time minister intensely interested in the evangelizing work. In fact, he had a keen desire to enlarge his ministerial territory. —Compare Romans 15:23, 24; 2 Corinthians 10:15, 16.

Undoubtedly with a similar spirit, many of Jehovah's modern-day witnesses have made themselves available to serve as missionaries in foreign lands. Other Christian ministers are serving where the need is great. And many more have found it possible to become pioneers, full-time preachers of the good news.

But what about you? If you are not now serving as a pioneer, can you enlarge your territory, so to speak, by becoming such a full-time Kingdom proclaimer?

Benefits of Pioneer Service

Zealous and effective pioneers are motivated not by self-interest but by love of God and the desire to help others. Such full-time ministers strongly feel the need to apply God's Word in their lives and are delighted that they can make room for full-time service. And there are benefits from doing so.

'Daily telling the good news of salvation by Jehovah' is one benefit of pioneer service. (Psalm 96:2) Indeed, regularly talking about God and his purposes is satisfying, especially because this helps others on the way to life. "There is no greater pleasure than that of studying the Bible with someone and seeing him become a worshiper of Jehovah," said a sister who has been in the pioneer service for 46 years.

Greater skill in handling 'the sword of the spirit, God's word,' is a benefit resulting from regular use of the Bible in the pioneer ministry. (Ephesians 6:17) Typical of expressions made by many pioneers is

the following: "Apart from increasing my courage, pioneering helped me to become familiar with many Bible texts that had been committed to memory, ready for use."

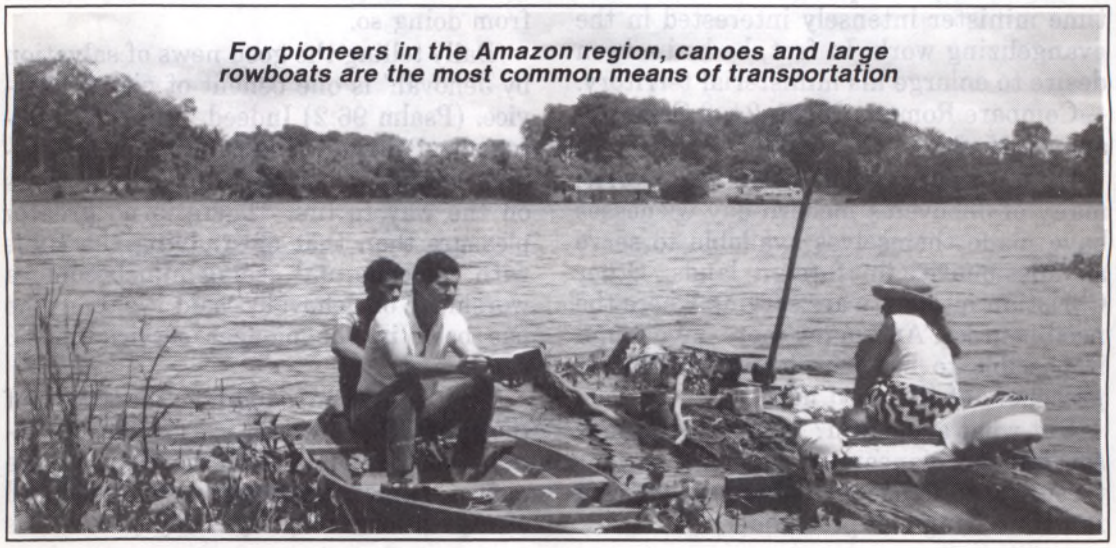
The wholesome influence of pioneer service can also be felt in the congregation. Concerning this, one elder wrote: "What a difference it made! The congregation's pace changed. The tendency is to increase our participation in Jehovah's service more and more." Yes, others may be stimulated by the zealous example of pioneer ministers.

Greater confidence in Jehovah may well result from participation in the pioneer ministry. Of course, full-time ministers must overcome some problems. But one pioneer couple expressed their confidence in these words: "Thanks to Jehovah, we have never lacked anything. As pioneers we have become dependent on Jehovah and have seen how he provides help when we most need it."—Psalm 34:10; 37:25.

Blessings for Reaching Out

'Test me out, please, and see whether I shall not open the floodgates of the heavens and empty out upon you a blessing,' said Jehovah centuries ago. (Malachi 3:10) During the 1984 service year, the average number of pioneers worldwide was 258,936. And how Jehovah has blessed these full-time ministers!

For instance, consider blessings enjoyed by pioneers in the Amazon region of Brazil. Generally, boats are used to get to the widely scattered villages along the riverbanks. Some settlements are situated in riverbeds, the wooden houses being built on stilts to keep them above water during the flood season. These houses are connected by rough wooden walkways, at times quite precarious, especially for heavy persons. When the water is low, access is difficult but possible through the undergrowth or along the muddy riverbed. Traveling by light canoes can be quite an adventure, for these turn over at times. Add to all of this the problems resulting from malaria, typhoid fever, parasitic worms, intense heat, and insect infestation. Despite these difficulties, however, Jehovah's spirit helps our brothers to succeed in declaring the good



For pioneers in the Amazon region, canoes and large rowboats are the most common means of transportation

news in such territories.—Zechariah 4:6.

One pioneer sister serving in the Amazon region stated: "Our work was most gratifying." Citing a fine experience, she told of a return visit on a certain man who had previously accepted some of our literature. She had to travel two hours by boat, but on arriving she found the man roasting manioc flour in a huge oven. He could not interrupt the process without running the risk of burning the flour. So what could she do? Well, the pioneer asked her partner to keep turning the flour with the big wooden shovel. Thus the man had an opportunity to listen attentively while the pioneer demonstrated how to study the publication he had acquired.

Quite often, our brothers working in this region get up before daybreak so as to reach the homes of the people while it is still early. The pioneers then continue witnessing right through the day. And how richly Jehovah blesses them!—Proverbs 10:22.

Elsewhere in Brazil, too, pioneers are enjoying many blessings in Jehovah's service. For example, imagine the joy of a pioneer who was able to help a convict learn the truth. This man, once feared because of his violent temper, was serving a long prison sentence. Upon his becoming convinced of the truth, however, his personality was transformed to such an extent that the prison authorities were impressed and gave him permission to preach in the penitentiary. Now baptized, this man is on probation and conducts several home Bible studies.

This pioneer has also been able to help others in the same penitentiary. Concerning this work, he comments: "It is a reason for much happiness for me, because the seed I was able to sow has already germinated and produced fruitage." At least four men who have been released from prison now attend Christian meetings regularly. Four others are taking the truth seriously, and one of them is preparing for baptism.

The Territory Is Large

The continuing increase in the ranks of Jehovah's worshipers gives tangible evidence that God still has many people to gather throughout the worldwide territory. (Compare Acts 18:9, 10.) Can you have a greater share in this disciple-making work?

If you are not already pioneering, why not talk to those having success in full-time service? You, too, may be able to succeed as a pioneer. After prayerfully examining your circumstances, you may be able to enlarge your territory as a pioneer.

A Problem With Borrowing

"The problem with borrowing money is that as soon as one has, one inevitably begins to think of it as one's own. One becomes used to it, treats it like family and may even come to resent or lose sight of the fact that it must all someday leave to visit someone else. Borrowing is simple. Paying back is what hurts." So noted *Parade,* a Sunday newspaper magazine, regarding a psychological problem with borrowing money.

There is more to it, however, than the psychological factor. There is also the moral factor—the obligation to pay back what is borrowed. We do well, therefore, to keep in mind Jehovah's view of one who does not repay what he borrows. God's Word says: "The wicked one is borrowing and does not pay back."—Psalm 37:21.

A Unique Athenian Rock

TO THE WEST of Athens' famous Acropolis and separated from it by a small valley is an outcrop of limestone that the Greeks call the Areopagus. Its dimensions are not particularly impressive, measuring about 1,000 feet (300 m) long by a little over 400 feet (120 m) at its widest point and rising to a height of about 370 feet (115 m). What is unique about this rock is the extraordinary history, secular and Biblical, associated with it.

The name Areopagus literally means "Hill of Ares," or "Mars' Hill," Mars being the Roman equivalent of the Greek Ares, the god of war. According to legend, the first court hearing, on a bizarre murder case among the gods, was held here. Ares was on trial for killing the son of the sea god Poseidon. Thus the rock became important in the judicial and political affairs of ancient Athens. It eventually became the seat of the city's earliest court, which took on the name Court, or Council, of the Areopagus, or simply the Areopagus.

It is not certain just when the Court actually began. But by about the seventh century B.C.E., it wielded considerable power over all the affairs of the city, its members being elected from among the aristocratic and the wealthy, the elite of the people. As time went on, however, much of its power was transferred to the city magistrates and the popular court. Its jurisdiction was limited to homicide cases and religious and educational matters.

At the time of Pericles (c. 495-429 B.C.E.), for example, it was reported that the Areopagites were trying those who desecrated the "sacred olive trees" from which olive oil for sacred service was extracted. The Areopagites were considered the guardian and trustee of morals and religion, protecting the city from any undesirable "foreign deities." Interestingly, students of history will recall that the famous philosopher Socrates (470-399 B.C.E.) was condemned by the Athenian court for just such reasons: "corruption of the young" and "neglect of the gods whom the city worships and the practice of religious novelties."

When the Areopagus held sessions on homicide cases, they were generally conducted in the open air so that "the judges and the accuser might not be polluted by being brought under the same roof with the offender." The proceedings called for the accuser to be seated on a stone called Relentlessness and the accused on one called Outrage. Today, on top of the hill, one can see two white stones that are said to be the scene of the court. Hearings on other matters were probably held in the so-called Royal Gallery (Stoa Basileios) in the agora, or marketplace, situated in the valley below the Areopagus.

The best-known historical event to take place at the Areopagus, however, is the one recorded in the Bible in Acts chapter 17 —the apostle Paul's visit to Athens, where he gave his memorable speech "in the midst of the Areopagus."—Acts 17:22.

When Paul visited Athens, he was "irritated at beholding that the city was full of idols." This moved him to engage in many discussions with the people in the agora about "the good news of Jesus and the resurrection." Evidently this message piqued the curiosity of the people, especially the Epicurean and the Stoic philosophers, and they had Paul give a fuller account about the "foreign deities" and the "new teaching" at the Areopagus.—Acts 17:16-34.

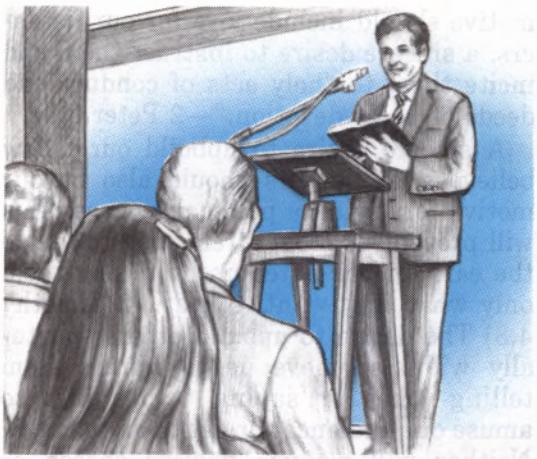
Rising to the occasion, Paul courageously and vigorously defended the good news of Jesus. His speech is a masterpiece of logic and refutation; its impact remains as powerful today as when the Athenians first heard it. Today, there is a bronze plaque at the foot of the rock, on the western side, to commemorate the event. Paul's speech is engraved on it in large Greek uncials, or capital letters, for all to see. It is a silent witness not only to the long and unique history of the rock but also to the historical authenticity of the Bible.

Why Do You Want to Give a Bible Talk?

JESUS CHRIST often spoke to large crowds, and he surely was an effective speaker. In fact, after Jesus concluded his renowned Sermon on the Mount, "the effect was that the crowds were astounded at his way of teaching." (Matthew 7:28) There can be no doubt that the Son of God had the highest of motives and that his public discourses brought glory to his heavenly Father.—Compare John 12: 46-50.

Public speaking was also one way that the good news was spread by Jesus' followers in the first century of our Common Era. For instance, at Corinth the apostle Paul "would give a talk in the synagogue every sabbath and would persuade Jews and Greeks." (Acts 18:1, 4) Moreover, Paul encouraged his co-worker Timothy with the words: "While I am coming, continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching." (1 Timothy 4:13) So public reading and speaking, with noble motives, certainly had their place among Jehovah's loyal servants of the first century.

Yet, there is need for caution. When Herod, clad in royal raiment, began giving a public address, the assembled people started to shout: "A god's voice, and not a man's!" At that instant the angel of Jehovah struck Herod. Why? "Because he did not give the glory to God."—Acts 12: 21-23.



Need for the Right Mental Attitude

Today, giving a public Bible talk surely is a very desirable privilege granted to mature Christian men. However, each minister would do well to examine his heart as to his motive. (Genesis 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9) Is he motivated by a desire to honor God and benefit fellow believers and others? Or does he wish to give such Bible talks because of the prominence associated with public speaking and his own desire to shine?

The right motive will manifest itself in various ways. For one thing, it will make us realize that only with the help of Jehovah's spirit can we do justice to the privilege of speaking God's truth from the public platform. Therefore, we will have an attitude similar to that of the apostle Peter, who said: "If anyone speaks, let him speak as it were the sacred pronouncements of God; if anyone ministers, let him minister as dependent on the strength that God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."—1 Peter 4:11.

Love must be the underlying reason for wanting to give a Bible talk. First of all, we must have love for Jehovah God, desiring to bring him honor and to share in the sanctifying of his holy name. Second, our

motive should include love for our listeners, a sincere desire to instruct them and incite them to "holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion."—2 Peter 3:11.

A sincere desire to upbuild our fellow believers and others should also be our motive for giving a public discourse. This will prevent us from attempting to 'tickle the ears' of our listeners by telling them only what they want to hear. (2 Timothy 4:3) The desire to upbuild others spiritually will also move us to refrain from telling jokes or saying things just to amuse our audiences or get them to laugh. Neither will we use flowery speech or make a display of worldly wisdom in an effort to impress our hearers. Rather, if we have the right motive in speaking publicly, we will follow the example of the apostle Paul, who gave 'a demonstration of spirit and power so that the faith of his hearers might be, not in men's wisdom, but in God's power.'—1 Corinthians 2:3-5.

Three Basic Elements

Giving a public Bible talk is a matter of mind and heart. Therefore, Christian speakers must have not only the right attitude but also something worth while to say. That requires the giving of thought to three basic elements. These are the Scriptures, facts, and logic.

First, it must be remembered that the burden of a public Bible talk obviously is to be borne by the scriptures used by the speaker. If you are privileged to give such a talk, you should have a good knowledge of your subject and should be able to quote scriptures, read them well, and apply them properly. On the day of Pentecost, 33 C.E., the apostle Peter repeatedly referred to the Scriptures in support of his remarks. (Acts 2:14-41) The Beroeans were satisfied that Paul had based his remarks solidly on the Scriptures. (Acts 17:10, 11) And Apollos "demonstrated by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ," the long-looked-for Messiah.—Acts 18:28.

Of course, the Scriptural basis for a public talk is furnished in the outline provided by the Watch Tower Society. Yet, the speaker can use additional or parallel scriptures, provided they apply equally well and that this is not done excessively. In this regard, the Christian minister must be careful to keep up with the increasing spiritual light. For example, a speaker might incorrectly apply 1 Corinthians 2:9 to the future earthly Paradise, whereas the context (verses 7 and 10) shows that it applies to the deeper things of God's wisdom.

Second, there is the matter of facts used in support of remarks made by a public speaker. Care should be exercised so that the points presented are not open to legitimate question or challenge. Especially is care important if a point seems to be sensational. It is wise—and essential—to make certain that what is said really is factual. For this reason, it is always best to be able to refer to reliable sources of information in case certain statements are questioned. On the day of Pentecost, Peter pointed to well-known facts. So did the apostle Paul on the Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, in Athens.—Acts 2:22; 17:22, 23, 28.

In Our Next Issue

- **Peace and Security —From What Source?**
- **My Ten Years in Spain's Military Prisons**
- **Learning From Jesus' Temptations**

Third, there is a definite need for logic. The Christian public speaker needs to reason with his listeners. Thus we read that Paul "began to reason in the synagogue with the Jews and the other people who worshiped God and every day in the marketplace with those who happened to be on hand." (Acts 17:17) In a public talk, the reasoning should be logical, simple, clear, easy to follow. Of great help in this regard is the use of connectives that show the relationship between what has been said and what follows it.

If you are privileged to be a public speaker, then be sure that you have the right mental attitude toward giving a Bible talk. Have love in your heart for your Creator and for your fellowman. Assemble and present scriptures and facts in a logical manner. Then this proverb will apply to you: "The tongue of the wise ones is a healing." (Proverbs 12:18) Moreover, giving fine Bible talks that honor God is one way to "save both yourself and those who listen to you."—1 Timothy 4:16.

Questions From Readers

■ **How was Jerusalem "in slavery with her children," as the apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 4:25?**

Primarily, Jerusalem and its people in Paul's day were in slavery to the Mosaic Law.

In Galatians chapter 4 the apostle showed that Christians in the new covenant had been purchased by Christ and thus were free. This contrasted with the situation of Jews under the Law covenant. Paul illustrated this with Abraham's wife (Sarah) and his concubine (Hagar), saying: "These women mean two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai, which brings forth children for slavery, and which is Hagar. Now this Hagar means Sinai, a mountain in Arabia [where Jehovah gave the Law to Israel *through* Moses], and she corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother."—Galatians 4:24-26.

When Paul said that the "women mean two covenants," he was simply speaking in an abbreviated style. Jehovah is not illustratively married to an impersonal covenant but to an organized people in the covenant. He had earlier considered Israel under the Law covenant to be like his wife. (Compare Isaiah 54:1, 6.) However, the free woman (Sarah) stood for the Jerusalem above, Jehovah's universal organization, which is as a wife to him.

But how could the Jews be considered to be in slavery to the Law, since it was perfect and was provided by God himself?

It is true that of itself 'the Law was holy, and the commandment was holy and righteous and good.' (Romans 7:12) But the imperfect Israelites under the Law could not keep it perfectly, much as they might try. (Romans 7:14-16) The apostle Peter referred to that fact when he asked the following question before the Christian governing body: "Why are you making a test of God by imposing upon the neck of the disciples *a yoke* that neither our forefathers nor we were capable of bearing?" (Acts 15:10) Similarly, in Galatians 4:4, 5 Paul said that Christ came "that he might release by purchase those under law." Whoever would insist that Christians were obliged to 'observe days and months and seasons and years,' as prescribed by the Law, would cause slavery all over again.—Galatians 4:9, 10.

Of course, as pointed out on page 13 of *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1985, first-century Jews were slaves in a number of ways. They were politically in bondage to the Romans. They were slaves to sin. (John 8:34) And there were erroneous religious views to which they were bound. But the principal slavery to which Paul referred in Galatians 4:25 was the Jews' slavery to the Mosaic Law covenant, given at Sinai and represented by Abraham's slave concubine Hagar.

AMAZING FEATS OF MEMORY

A young child can remember more than you think. In a letter of thanks for the cassette tapes of *My Book of Bible Stories,* a mother from Arizona writes:

"Tonight my little four-year-old boy, Jamin, who can't read yet, quoted several Bible stories to my husband pretty much word for word. He has been listening to them every day for a few weeks. In fact, he has to have 'his tape' turned on to take his nap or go to bed. Before he went to bed tonight, my husband, Sid, was reading a Bible story to Jamin. I heard Sid chuckle. Jamin had finished the story with him. He tried another but only said a couple of words before Jamin quoted it all. I suggested trying another story. Jamin did it again and again. Needless to say, we were both amazed."