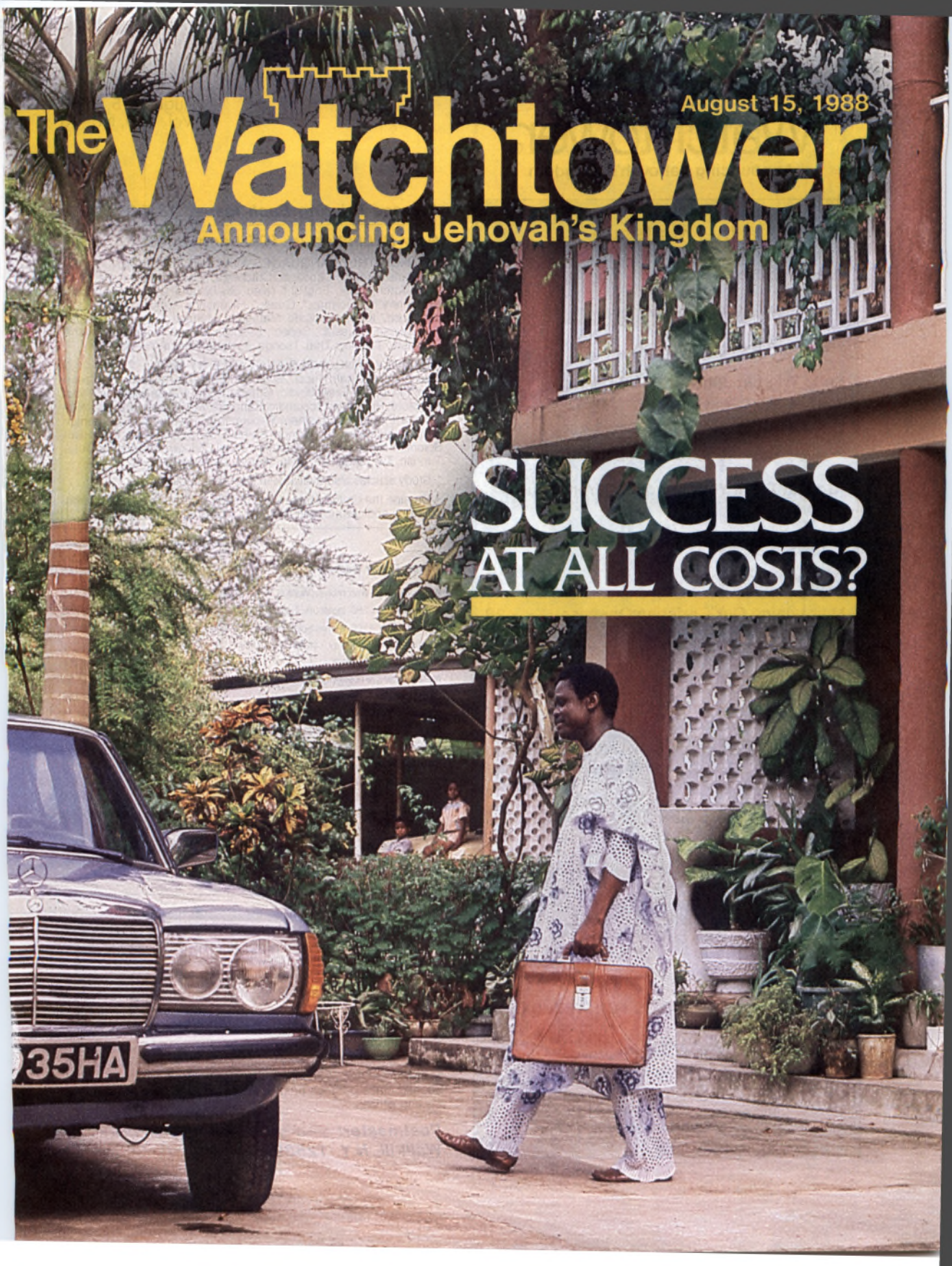
August 15, 1988

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

SUCCESS AT ALL COSTS?



The Watchtower®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

August 15, 1988
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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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The Pressure to SUCCEED

A TV commercial urges Nigerians to "Be successful. Be important" by using a certain brand of toothpaste. While we all know that toothpaste could hardly hold the key to a person's becoming important, the advertisers are showing they recognize that people want to be identified with things that carry the tag of "success."

The desire to succeed and to be recognized by others is a natural one. Nevertheless, both men and women often place such emphasis on human achievement that they put themselves under pressure to "keep up with the Joneses." Could this be dangerous? Could it affect you?

The Pressures People Face

Personal ambition to be rich can exert pressure. Many people want to be able to make a "showy display of [their] means of life," to have social prestige and prominence.—1 John 2:16.

The family may exert pressure. In many homes the husband must continually strive to improve his earnings and his standing at his workplace in order to boost the family's social standing. Or the wife may strive to be a successful career woman. Children can be pushed toward unreasonably high academic performance at school. This is particularly a problem in developing nations where many believe that the key to a person's bettering his lot is higher education.

The community too may exert pressure on a person to aim for higher education, wealth, and positions of prestige and influence. Success, which is usually measured in terms of money, may lead to prominence, praise, and respect. A Nigerian *Daily Times* editorial said: "No matter how virtuous and impressive one's qualities are, most [people] do not respect and recognise him, if he has no money."

What Can Result?

Such worldly success can bring some enjoyment, but consider the high price it also exacts. Newspaper columnist Achike Okafo wrote: "Settled families . . . are daily breaking down, largely because of money and what money can buy. . . . Even the spouses who still manage to hold together hardly talk in terms of their parental obligations . . . because they are all too busy in the pursuit of the material requisites of well-being." Add to this the problem of neglected children turning to drugs and crime or running away from home, and the price becomes very high.

The pressure to succeed has pushed some ambitious people into dishonesty and immorality. Young women have even traded sexual favors for good exam results and employment. Even when success is achieved honorably, prosperous persons may face the resentment or envy of less successful ones as well as the hypocrisy of "friends" who are attracted by wealth and prestige. (Ecclesiastes 5:11) Is this really success?

The wise writer of Ecclesiastes in the Bible answers no. After surveying his great wealth, power, and prestige, as well as the enjoyment these brought, he concluded that these were "vanity and a striving after wind."—Ecclesiastes 2:3-11.

Does this mean that every pursuit in life is futile? Or is there a proper balance that people can have while building a productive career? What does experience show will likely prove to be their most worthwhile goal?

SUCCESS
At All Costs?

THE determination to succeed indicates that one has a definite goal. What is your goal in life? What are you prepared to do in order to achieve it? Indeed, what should be your foremost pursuit in order to be truly satisfied and happy?

In many Third World lands, the general standard of living leaves much to be desired. In view of problems faced there, considering appropriate counsel from God's Word will help us to evaluate better our own goals and success, no matter where we live.

With poverty abounding, many people have pursued financial success to the exclusion of everything else. Some resort to dishonesty so as to achieve this. On becoming true Christians, though, they should have left this attitude permanently behind in order to conform to the Bible's righteous standards.

However, even some Christians get

caught up again in aiming at worldly goals. They may fall into unchristian conduct to achieve success. Parents neglect their families. Individuals neglect their service to God. What do you think would be the result as to satisfaction in life and happiness?

Alerting us to the result, the Bible warns: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires . . . For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."—1 Timothy 6:9, 10.

"All sorts of injurious things." 'Stabbed all over with many pains.' That certainly does not sound like a description of satisfaction and happiness, does it? Yet, the experience of millions of people throughout the centuries, even right up to today, proves how true that Bible statement is. What, then, does this recommend as to a Christian's goals and life course?

Led Astray—How?

In what ways can Christians be led astray from the faith? Some have gone as far as to reject totally godly morals and beliefs. In other cases individuals have been sidetracked from the course of godly devotion, even exploiting such devotion as a means to gain influence over others. So the Bible speaks of "men corrupted in mind and despoiled of the truth, thinking that godly devotion is a means of gain." (1 Timothy 6:5) While not wholly abandoning Christianity, they may find themselves violating Bible principles that are essential elements of the Christian faith.

Jesus told his followers not to be like people of the world who lord it over others. He said: "This is not the way among you;

Is money the key?

but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister." In condemning Jewish religious leaders, Jesus went still further. He indicated that great love of worldly prestige earns God's disapproval. (Matthew 20:26; 23:6-9, 33) Thus, Christians should seek to serve one another rather than to outshine or dominate others. The lover of money who seeks success at all costs can be easily led astray from this course.

How do you compare in this regard? Do you find yourself measuring your success by the extent to which you exert authority over others? Do you manipulate or bend Christian principles and doctrines in order to assert authority or to acquire it? Do you feel that you must achieve more than your peers no matter what the cost? Do you take great pleasure in talking about your wealth or career attainments? If so, then you need to analyze whether you are being led astray from the faith.

The Pains of "Success"

Jesus also said: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth . . . For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also . . . You cannot slave for God and for Riches." (Matthew 6:19-24) Are parents who direct their children primarily toward material goals and worldly careers following this counsel? Is emphasis on worldly success worth the cost if children abandon the truth and adopt unchristian life-styles? Is it worth it to sacrifice or, at the least, to jeopardize their spiritual lives for the sake of "treasures upon the earth"? Parents who do this often find even they are 'stabbed all over with many pains' out of concern for their children and of regret over the spiritual —and sometimes physical—loss of them.

The love of riches is a demanding master. It exacts people's time, strength, and abilities; and it chokes out godly devotion. It usually entices people to seek even greater wealth and worldly prestige, thus drawing them ever further from the faith. The Bible rightly says: "A mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, neither any lover of wealth with income." —Ecclesiastes 5:10.

Even after becoming a Christian, one African businessman's love for financial success kept on taking first place in his life. He neglected Christian activities in favor of social visits with worldly business associates. He made no spiritual progress, despite efforts by elders of his congregation to help him. He thus found himself in a spiritual quandary—in a no-man's-land where he was hardly a Christian yet wanted to be recognized as one. All of us can appreciate that his situation was not conducive to deep satisfaction in life or to lasting happiness.

Such persons are bound to face spiritual pains. Business and social interaction with people who have few scruples about honesty or sexual morality exposes one to unwholesome influences. Christians who are thus exposed have to fight against these influences and usually have a struggle with their conscience. Some eventually become like their associates and are totally led astray from the faith. (1 Corinthians 15:33) Of what benefit is financial success that leads to such spiritual and moral failure? As Jesus said: "What benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul?"—Matthew 16:26.

A Better Kind of Success

Experience has confirmed that it is wise to heed this Bible counsel: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but . . . prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Yes, we are wise if we do not copy the world or pine for what it has to offer. Our prime concern should be for God's approval, which cannot be obtained by pursuing the things of the world.—Romans 12:2; 1 John 2:15, 16.

Jesus illustrated this with a farmer who trusted in his wealth but to whom God said: "Unreasonable one, this night they are demanding your soul from you. Who, then, is to have the things you stored up?" Summarizing his illustration, Jesus said: "So it goes with the man that lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God." Jesus was showing that "even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." —Luke 12:15-21.

Jesus used the living example of a rich young ruler to show the same thing. This man was successful in a worldly sense, and he evidently wanted to be morally upright. However, Jesus did not hold him

out as a symbol of success. Rather, Jesus said it would be difficult for such people "to make their way into the kingdom of God." Most people in that situation are not prepared to sacrifice materialistic interests and to seek God's Kingdom as the primary goal in their lives.—Luke 18:18-30.

Further emphasizing the priority of spiritual interests, Jesus said: "Never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." So, even with regard to necessary things, we must have our priorities right. For us to be truly successful—to achieve happiness and find genuine satisfaction—the spiritual must come ahead of the material.—Matthew 6:31-33.

Keep Seeking Spiritual Success

So the wise course obviously is to seek success by pursuing God's Kingdom and his righteousness. This involves studying the Bible so as to "prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." His will involves your putting his service first in your life, your having a full share in the Christian ministry, your not neglecting Christian meetings, and your leading a morally upright life in harmony with God's righteousness. These things should not be set aside for, or overshadowed by, materialistic interests. This was what was implied by Jesus' counsel to the rich young ruler: "Sell all the things you have and distribute to poor people, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come be my follower."—Romans 12:2; Luke 18:22.

Will parents send their children off to pursue success through higher education?

In doing this, you will be building up your own spirituality and that of your family. Instead of becoming high-minded or resting your hope on uncertain riches, you will be among those who are "rich in fine works, . . . safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life." Yes, your goal can be everlasting life in the restored earthly Paradise because "the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." There is no greater success that you could ever achieve.—1 Timothy 6:17-19; 1 John 2:17.

The Source of Happiness

DURING his ministry in Galilee, Jesus performed miracles, and he now repeats these in Judea. For instance, he casts out of a man a demon that has prevented him from speaking. The crowds are amazed, but critics raise the same objection as was raised in Galilee. "He expels the demons by means of Beelzebub the ruler of the demons," they claim. Others want greater evidence from Jesus as to his identity, and they try to tempt him by asking for a sign from heaven.

Knowing what they are thinking, Jesus gives the same answer to his critics in Judea as he gave to those in Galilee. He observes that every kingdom divided against itself will fall. "So," he asks, "if Satan is also divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?" He shows the dangerous position of his critics by saying: "If it is by means of God's finger I expel the demons, the kingdom of God has really overtaken you."

Those observing Jesus' miracles should respond to them in the same way as those did who centuries before saw Moses perform a miracle. They exclaimed: "It is the finger of God!" It was also "God's finger" that carved the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. And "God's finger"—his holy spirit, or active force—is what enables Jesus to cast out demons and to cure the sick. So the Kingdom of God has indeed overtaken these critics, since Jesus, the designated King of the Kingdom, is right there in their midst.

Jesus then illustrates that his ability to expel demons is evidence of his power over Satan, even as when a stronger man comes along and overpowers a well-armed man guarding his palace. He also repeats the illustration he told in Galilee regarding an unclean spirit that leaves a man, but when the man does not fill the void with good things, the spirit returns with seven others, and the condition of the man becomes worse than at the first.

While listening to these teachings, a woman from the crowd is moved to exclaim loudly: "Happy is the womb that carried you and the breasts that you sucked!" Since the desire of every Jewish woman is to be the mother of a prophet and particularly the Messiah, it is understandable that this woman would say this. Apparently she thought Mary could especially be happy because of being Jesus' mother.

However, Jesus quickly corrects the woman regarding the true source of happiness. "No," he responds, "rather, Happy are those hearing the word of God and keeping it!" Never did Jesus imply that his mother, Mary, should be given special honor. Instead, he showed that true happiness is found in being a faithful servant of God, not in any physical ties or accomplishments.

As he did in Galilee, Jesus also goes on to rebuke the people for requesting a sign from heaven. He tells them that no sign will be given except the sign of Jonah. Jonah became a sign both by his three days in the fish and by his bold preaching, which resulted in the Ninevites' being moved to repent. "But, look!" Jesus says, "something more than Jonah is here." Similarly, the queen of Sheba marveled at Solomon's wisdom. "But, look!" Jesus also says, "something more than Solomon is here."

Jesus explains that when a person lights a lamp, he does not put it in a vault or under a basket but upon a

lampstand so that people can see the light. Perhaps he is intimating that teaching and performing miracles before these obstinate persons in his audience is comparable to hiding the light of a lamp. The eyes of such observers are not simple, or in focus, so the intended purpose of his miracles is not accomplished.

Jesus has just expelled a demon and has caused a mute man to speak. This should motivate people with simple, or focused, eyes to praise this glorious feat and proclaim the good news! Yet, with these critics, this is not what occurs. So Jesus concludes: "Be alert, therefore. Perhaps the light that is in you is darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is bright with no part at all dark, it will all be as bright as when a lamp gives you light by its rays." **Luke 11:14-36; Exodus 8:18, 19; 31:18; Matthew 12:22, 28.**

- What is the response to Jesus' healing the man?
- What is God's finger, and how had God's Kingdom overtaken Jesus' listeners?
- What is the source of true happiness?
- How can a person have a simple eye?

BUILD TRUST IN JEHOVAH

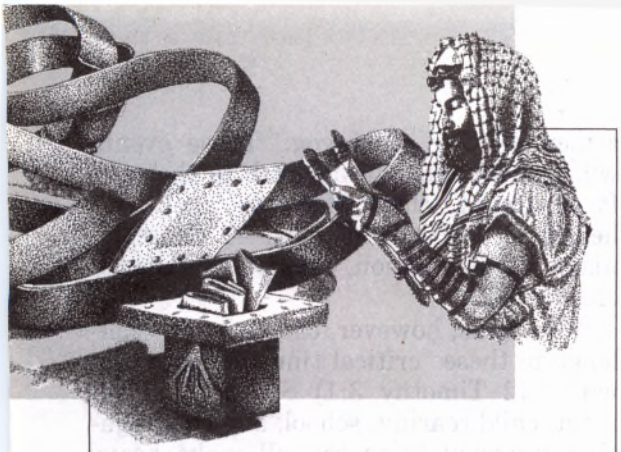
By Diligently Studying His Word

"Apply your hearts to all the words that I am speaking in warning to you today . . . For it is no valueless word for you, but it means your life."—DEUTERONOMY 32:46, 47.

THEIR long wilderness sojourn had neared its end. Only the winding Jordan now separated the nation from the long-awaited Promised Land. For the nation's leader, Moses, however, Israel's prospect of entering that land evoked sober contemplation. He could recall how the nation had once before stumbled because of its lack of trust in Jehovah and thus had been denied entry into Canaan. —Numbers 13:25-14:30.

[2] Moses thus summoned the nation together on the rolling plains of Moab. After reviewing their national history and reiterating God's Law, Moses presented what has been called his transcendent composition. In the language of superlative poetry, he urged Israel to trust and to obey Jehovah, "a God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he." In conclusion, Moses exhorted: "Apply your hearts to all the words that I am speaking in warning to you today, that you may command your sons to take care to do all the words of this law. For it is no valueless word for you, but it means your life."—Deuteronomy 32:4, 46, 47.

1, 2. (a) What prospect faced Israel as they encamped on the plains of Moab? (b) What exhortation did Moses give the nation?



Instead of writing God's Law on their hearts, Jews tied on scripture-containing cases

'Applying Their Hearts' to God's Word

[3] Moses admonished the Israelites to 'apply their hearts' not only to his stirring song but to all the sacred writings. They had to "pay good heed" (*Knox*), "be sure to obey" (*Today's English Version*), or "meditate upon" (*The Living Bible*) God's Law. Only by being thoroughly familiar with it could they 'command their sons to take care to do all the words of this law.' At Deuteronomy 6:6-8, Moses wrote: "These words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son . . . And you must tie them as a sign upon your hand, and they must serve as a frontlet band between your eyes."

[4] Bible commentator W. H. Davey tells of how in later times, these words "were interpreted literally by the Jews, and the direction contained in them was turned to superstitious uses. Certain verses . . . were written on parchment, and worn on the arm and forehead during the time of prayer." Elaborate scripture-containing cases, or phylacteries, were worn in Jesus' time and are still employed by certain Jewish sects today. (Matthew 23:5) But, adds Davey: "Men in their folly satisfied themselves with carrying about with them on their persons a copy of the mere words of the law, instead of showing forth in their lives the observance of the commandment therein contained."

[5] No, it was not on their literal hands or foreheads that God's Law was to dwell but 'on their hearts.' By gaining not just knowledge of it but deep appreciation for it, that Law would always be kept in view, as if it were written on a tablet before their eyes or tied to their hands.

Provisions for Learning God's Law

[6] How, though, could the Israelites learn the Law's some 600 statutes? Copies of it were no doubt rare at first. The future king of Israel was to "write in a book for himself a copy of this law . . . , and he must read in it all the days of his life, in order that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God so as to keep all the words of this law." (Deuteronomy 17:18, 19) God arranged for the Law to be read every seventh year at the Festival of Booths. (Deuteronomy 31:10-13) While such an occasion was no doubt uplifting, it was too infrequent to impart in-depth knowledge.

[7] Jehovah also arranged for the tribe of Levi to 'instruct Jacob in God's judicial decisions and Israel in God's law.' (Deuteronomy 33:8, 10; compare Malachi 2:7.) On some occasions, the Levites carried on teaching campaigns that served the entire nation. (2 Chronicles 17:7-9; Nehemiah 8:7-9) It appears that, in time, at least

3, 4. (a) To what were the Israelites to 'apply their hearts,' and what did this involve? (b) How did later generations apply Moses' counsel?

5. What was the proper application of Moses' words at Deuteronomy 6:6-8?

6, 7. (a) What provisions did Jehovah make to acquaint the Israelites with the Mosaic Law? (b) How might it also have been possible for God's people in ancient times to become instructed in God's Word?

portions of God's Word were also available to people in general.* Hence, the psalmist could write: "Happy is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night." (Psalm 1:1, 2) Moses' exhortation to 'apply their hearts to God's Word' thus amounted to a command to make a diligent study of the Bible.

'Applying Our Hearts' to God's Word Today

[8] Israel failed to heed Moses' exhortation. When the nation finally established its monarchy, evidently most of its kings failed to 'write for themselves a copy of the law and read in it all the days of their lives.' By the seventh century B.C.E., in the days of King Josiah, "the very book of the law" had been all but lost. (2 Kings 22: 8-13) The poor example on the part of the nation's leaders doubtless hastened the nation's plunge into apostasy. True to Moses' warning, national disaster occurred in 607 B.C.E.—Deuteronomy 28:15-37; 32:23-35.

[9] Like the ancient Israelites, Christians today stand on the border of a promised land—God's righteous new world. (2 Peter 3:13) Startling events loom on the horizon: the declaration of "peace and security," the fall of "Babylon the Great," the attack of 'Gog of Magog.' These events will put our trust in Jehovah to the test. It is urgent, then, that we 'apply our hearts to God's word' now!—1 Thessalonians 5:3; Revelation, chapter 18; Ezekiel, chapter 38.

[10] Doing so, however, can be a real challenge in these "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) Secular employment, child rearing, school, and congregation responsibilities can all make heavy demands on our time. As a result, we may tend to excuse ourselves and slack off in our Bible study, reasoning that 'I'm doing enough to get by.' Yet, the Bible exhorts Christians: "Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them." (1 Timothy 4:15, 16) Let us consider now some powerful reasons for doing so.

Strengthening Our Relationship With God

[11] Job was one "fearing God and turning aside from bad." But after Jehovah further revealed himself in a windstorm, Job could say: "In hearsay I have heard about you, but now my own eye does see you." (Job 1:1; 42:5) Can we today "see" God, that is, go beyond mere acquaintance, intimately know the many facets of his personality? Indeed we can! Through the pages of the Bible, Jehovah has revealed more of himself than was known even to Job.

[12] We have a clearer view of the depth of God's love, knowing that he "loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son." (John 3:16) Through Bible prophecies, we have an outline of God's activities—clear to the end of the Millennium! (Revelation, chapters 18-22) We have the record of God's dealings with the

* Broken pieces of pottery, or ostraca, were commonly used in Bible times as an inexpensive writing surface. Says *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1986): "Ostraca could be used even by the poorest classes, who could not afford anything else to write on." To what extent ostraca were used by ancient Israelites for jotting down Bible texts is unknown. Interestingly, though, seventh-century C.E. ostraca bearing Bible texts have been discovered in Egypt, suggesting one means by which common people had access to portions of the Bible.

8. To what extent did Israel heed Moses' exhortation, and with what results?
9. How is the situation of Christians today similar to that of the ancient Israelites?
10. Why may some slack off in personal study?
11, 12. (a) How did gaining a more intimate knowledge of God affect Job? (b) Why can our vision of God be clearer than in Job's day?

Christian congregation: his bringing in of Gentiles, his appointing of a "faithful and discreet slave" to nourish his people, his calling forth "a great crowd" with hope of living forever in Paradise on earth. (Matthew 24:45; Revelation 7:9, 14-17; Ephesians 3:3-6) After peering into the deep things of God and contemplating his marvelous works in our behalf, we cannot help but exclaim: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge!"—Romans 11:33.

[13] The psalmist said: "With my whole heart I have searched for you." We can do the same by making a daily consideration of Scriptural material; it does much to strengthen our bond with Jehovah. Earnest study also helps make our way become 'firmly established to keep God's regulations.'—Psalm 119:5, 10.

Study Helps Us Defend Our Faith

[14] "I do not want you Witnesses in my house!" said one Ghanaian man to two who called at his home. He further berated the Witnesses for "not accepting blood transfusions and not saluting the national flag." Such objections are commonly encountered in the field ministry. What a reproach—and a humiliation—it would be if we were unable "to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you"! (1 Peter 3:15) Fortunately, these Witnesses were able to use the Bible effectively to explain the proper view of blood and how a Christian balances respect for national symbols with avoidance of idolatry. The result? The man was impressed with their straightforward answers. Today, both he and his wife are baptized Witnesses.

13. How can we 'search for God,' and what are the benefits of doing so?
14. Illustrate the value of being 'ready to make a defense' of our Christian hope.

[15] Paul urges: "Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright." Personal study will help us not only to stay on the path of life ourselves but also to "be fully competent, completely equipped" to help others do so.—2 Timothy 2:15; 3:17.

Resisting Satan's Snares

[16] Today, advertising assails us with appeals to "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life." (1 John 2:16) Sexual immorality is glorified by the media and is often actively promoted by workmates and schoolmates. Inflammatory apostate literature may be sent unsolicited to our homes. Their curiosity piqued, some brothers have read such defiling material —to the ruin of their faith. There is also the selfish, fleshly "spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience." How easy it is to become infected by it and to develop a negative, critical spirit!—Ephesians 2:2.

[17] Few, of course, set out to be ensnared by Satan. Rather, by neglecting personal study, like a boat loosed from its moorings, they slowly "drift away" and become prime targets for attack by Satan. (Hebrews 2:1) One young brother, for example, became immorally involved with a young girl at school. "I discovered," he recalls, "that the main cause for this was the fact that I was starving spiritually. I did no personal study. That is why I could not stand the temptation." A program of personal study, however, helped the brother to become spiritually strong.

[18] Satan is determined to destroy as

15. How does personal study equip us for our ministry?
16. What are some snares of Satan that confront Jehovah's people?
17, 18. How can personal study prevent us from 'drifting away'?

many of God's people as he can. By feeding our mind constantly with good things that come from God's Word and his faithful steward, we can avoid being ensnared. (Philippians 4:8) Reminders to avoid materialism, sexual immorality, apostate thinking, and a negative spirit abound both in the Bible and in the publications of the Watch Tower Society. If we do indeed pay more than the usual attention, we will never drift away.

Provisions From Jehovah's Organization to Help Us

[19] Study is hard work. We can therefore be grateful that Jehovah's organization grants us much assistance. In recent years some have claimed that individuals should be allowed to interpret the Bible themselves. The Ethiopian eunuch, however, openly acknowledged his need for spiritual guidance. As a circumcised proselyte, he no doubt already had a considerable knowledge of the Bible. The very fact that he would attempt to study something as deep as the prophecy of Isaiah 53 indicates this. Yet, when asked if he understood what he was reading, he admitted: "Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?"—Acts 8:26-33.

19. The Ethiopian eunuch illustrates what about our need for spiritual guidance?

Points for Review

- Why did Moses exhort the Israelites to 'apply their hearts to God's Word,' and how were they to do so?
- How does personal study strengthen our relationship with God and help us defend our faith?
- What role does personal study play in our resisting Satan's snares?
- Jehovah's organization has made what provisions to facilitate our study of God's Word?

[20] Jehovah's people today similarly need spiritual guidance. Desiring to "speak in agreement" when it comes to spiritual matters, they welcome the help offered by Jehovah's organization—and what a grand help that is! (1 Corinthians 1:10) We have a constant flow of information through the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. We have numerous books and brochures covering a wide range of Bible topics. English-speaking readers are particularly blessed to have the *Watch Tower Publications Index 1930-1985,* a tool that can help a person 'keep seeking for wisdom as for silver and as for hid treasure.' —Proverbs 2:2-4.

[21] Are you taking full advantage of the Society's publications by using them for study and research? Or do such publications serve as little more than shelf ornaments? Interestingly, the apostle Paul once instructed Timothy to "bring . . . the scrolls, especially the parchments" to him at Rome; evidently, Paul was referring to portions of the Hebrew Scriptures. (2 Timothy 4:13) He no doubt wanted them on hand in order to facilitate study and research. If you have not done so already, why not start accumulating your own library of theocratic publications so that you too can do research? Keep such publications accessible, in order, neat, and clean. Set aside a place to study that is quiet and well lit. Schedule regular times for personal study.

[22] Like the Israelites encamped on the fertile plains of Moab, we stand at the

20. (a) What are some of the provisions Jehovah's organization has made to help us in our personal study of the Bible? (b) How do you feel about such provisions?
21. (a) How did the apostle Paul manifest an interest in personal study? (b) What are some suggestions for facilitating personal study?
22. Why is 'applying our hearts to God's word' more important today than ever?

brink of the new world. More than ever before, we need to study God's Word diligently and 'buy out the opportune time' for study, perhaps sacrificing other interests, such as watching television. (Ephesians 5:16) "Form a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word," exhorts Peter, "that through it you may grow" not just to maturity but "to salvation." (1 Peter 2:2; compare Hebrews 5: 12-14.) Our very lives are involved. So resist any tendency to slack off in personal study. Use it as a means of deepening your love for God and your trust in him; it is also a way to heighten your appreciation for the organization he is using to assist us. Yes, 'apply your heart' to God's Word, diligently, regularly. "It is no valueless word for you, but it means your life."

MANIFEST TRUST IN JEHOVAH

By Practicing the Things Learned

"Trust in Jehovah and do good; reside in the earth, and deal with faithfulness."—PSALM 37:3.

ONE'S study of God's Word is not for mere personal enjoyment. Study should be a means for cultivating trust in Jehovah. (Proverbs 3:1-5) The psalmist's words above show that godly trust, in turn, manifests itself in a person by his 'doing good.'

[2] James urged: "Become doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves with false reasoning. For if anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, this one is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself, and off he goes and immediately forgets what sort of man he is." (James 1: 22-24) So this looking was to be no mere passing glance. The Greek word for "look" that is used here basically "denotes the action of the mind in apprehending certain facts about a thing."—*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words,* by W. E. Vine; compare Acts 7:31, *Kingdom Interlinear.*

[3] Imagine, then, a man scrutinizing himself in a mirror, perhaps finding the reflection to be somewhat unflattering. He might see a double chin that came from overeating and overdrinking, bags under the eyes from sleeplessness, and wrinkles in his brow from nagging anxieties. Face-to-face with himself, he resolves to make long-overdue changes in habits and

1, 2. (a) What should be the desired result of personal study? (b) James gives what illustration, and is the looking described by him a cursory one?

3. How might a man who looks in a mirror quickly forget "what sort of man he is"?

life-style. Then "off he goes." With the disturbing image comfortably out of sight, he "immediately forgets," not so much what he looks like, but "what sort of man he is." His resolve to make changes passes.

[4] Similarly, you may be an able student of the Bible. Yet, how do you respond to what you see in the mirror of God's Word? When spiritual flaws and blemishes are reflected, does this cause you only momentary concern, or do you make a firm resolve to correct the defects? James added: "But he who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and who persists in it, this man, because he has become, not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, will be happy in his doing it." (James 1:25) The psalmist prayed: "Instruct me, O Jehovah, in the way of your regulations, that I may observe it down to the last." —Psalm 119:33.

What Our Practices Tell About Us

[5] Really, what we do or practice proves what we are inside. And sooner or later a person makes "the secret self" manifest by practicing either good or bad. (Psalm 51:6) Said Solomon: "Even by his practices a boy makes himself recognized as to whether his activity is pure and upright." (Proverbs 20:11) This was true of Jacob and Esau when young. As time passed, Esau's practices made his lack of spiritual appreciation evident. (Genesis 25:27-34; Hebrews 12:16) This has also been true of thousands who claimed to trust in Jehovah but who proved to be what the Bible calls "practicers of what is hurtful." (Job 34:8) The psalmist wrote: "When the wicked ones sprout as the vegetation and all the practicers of what is hurtful blossom forth, it is that they may be annihilated forever."—Psalm 92:7.

4. How does James' illustration apply to our study of the Scriptures?
5. (a) What do our practices tell about us? (b) What fate awaits those who are "practicers of what is hurtful"?

It is not enough to observe spiritual flaws and blemishes. We must act to correct them!

[6] The number of wicked people is rising, and their ruin will be soon; God will not tolerate wrongdoers indefinitely. (Proverbs 10:29) It is therefore imperative that we make our trust in Jehovah manifest by practicing what we learn. "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations," exhorts Peter. (1 Peter 2:12) What are some areas, then, in which we might improve?

Our Dealings With Others

[7] One area might be our manner of deal-

6. Why is it imperative that we make our trust in Jehovah manifest now?
7. Why must we be cautious in our dealings with "those on the outside"?

ing with others. Proverbs 13:20 cautions: "He that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." Failing to apply this inspired counsel, some allow themselves to become overly familiar with worldly individuals at work and at school. One married brother thus became involved in unclean conduct with a woman on his job. He also joined male coworkers on trips to local drinking establishments, resulting in his becoming drunk. Certainly, we need to "go on walking in wisdom toward those on the outside."—Colossians 4:5.

[8] But what about our dealings with fellow Christians? Suppose, for example, that you owe a brother money. Might you needlessly delay paying him, reasoning that because the brother seems well-off, you need it more than he does? "The wicked one is borrowing and does not pay back," says Psalm 37:21. Or if you are an employer, do you apply the principle "The workman is worthy of his wages" when it comes to paying Witness employees? (1 Timothy 5:18) Paul was able to say of his own dealings: "With holiness and godly sincerity . . . we have conducted ourselves in the world, but more especially toward you."—2 Corinthians 1:12.

Modest Dress and Grooming

[9] A traveling overseer in Germany described some local Christians as "the tennis-shoe generation" because of their overly casual attire at meetings. The branch office added that some meeting attenders "border on being sloppy," though "the vast majority of our brothers dress modestly." Another land similarly reports that "lack of personal hygiene is a problem here . . . Some brothers do not wear clean clothes. They leave their hair uncombed and dirty when going to meetings or in field service." How important it is for Jehovah's servants to be neat and clean in every respect!—2 Corinthians 7:1.

[10] We need to "dress modestly, with decency and propriety," especially when engaged in spiritual activities. (1 Timothy 2:9, *New International Version*) The issue is not whether a certain style is extremely fashionable but whether it is appropriate for one professing to be a minister of God. (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 6:3) Overly casual or tight-fitting clothes can detract from our message. Styles that blatantly and deliberately feminize men or masculinize women are definitely out of order. (Compare Deuteronomy 22:5.) Of course, local customs may vary, according to the weather, occupational needs, and so forth, so that the Christian congregation does not make hard-and-fast rules to cover the worldwide brotherhood. Nor should elders impose their personal tastes on the flock. However, if a Kingdom publisher's style of grooming generally disturbs the congregation or detracts from the ministry, kind counsel is in order. Would you respond to such counsel in humility, manifesting trust in Jehovah?—Hebrews 12:7.

8. How might some improve in their dealings with fellow Christians?
9. What trends in dress and grooming have been observed by some elders?
10. (a) What principle should guide our choice of dress and grooming? (b) When might counsel be appropriate, and how should we respond?

In Our Next Issue

- **Satan—Is He Real?**
- **Jehovah Gives Hope Amid Sorrow**
- **Children 'On Loan'—How Wise Is the Practice?**

Those pursuing wealth often bring upon themselves "many pains"

Trusting God to Provide for Kingdom Seekers

11 "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) How sad when some fail to heed those words! Swallowing the myth of financial security, they feverishly pursue wealth, secular education, and worldly careers, "trusting in their means of maintenance." (Psalm 49:6) Solomon warns: "Do not toil to gain riches. . . . Have you caused your eyes to glance at it, when it is nothing? For without fail it makes wings for itself like those of an eagle and flies away toward the heavens."—Proverbs 23:4, 5.

12 The apostle Paul further warns: "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains." (1 Timothy 6:10) In an interview in *U.S.News & World Report,* Dr. Douglas LaBier said that many young men and women in pursuit of wealth "report feelings of dissatisfaction, anxiety, depression, emptiness, paranoia, as well as a whole range of physical complaints—headaches, backaches, stomach problems, insomnia, eating problems."

13 Those who trust in Jehovah to provide for them spare themselves much pain and anxiety. True, being content with mere "sustenance and covering" may mean a more modest standard of living. (1 Timothy 6:8) But "valuable things will be of no benefit on the day of fury." (Proverbs 11:4) Furthermore, when we increase our service to Jehovah, we put ourselves in line for "the blessing of Jeho-

11. How have some become caught up in the pursuit of material things, and why is this unwise?
12. How do those pursuing wealth 'stab themselves all over with many pains'?

13. Why is it best to be content with "sustenance and covering"?

vah" that "makes rich, and he adds no pain with it."—Proverbs 10:22.

"Seek Peace and Pursue It"

[14] Another way we manifest our trust in Jehovah is to "seek peace and pursue it" among our fellow believers. (1 Peter 3: 10-12) At times, though, trivial matters are allowed to become a source of bitter contention among brothers: the decor of the Kingdom Hall, adjustments in congregation territories, Book Study assignments, the handling of magazine and literature supplies. Or, in some cases, rather than settling personal or business disputes in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-17, brothers have stopped speaking to each other or have disturbed the congregation with their controversy.

[15] James says: "The fruit of righteousness has its seed sown under peaceful conditions." (James 3:18) In the interest of peace, therefore, be inclined to yield to the tastes or opinions of others, even forgoing personal rights. (Compare Genesis 13:5-12.) For example, if two congregations share a Kingdom Hall, one congregation should not take the position that it "owns" the hall and has the authority to dictate meeting times or other matters to the other congregation. Mutual respect and cooperation should prevail.

[16] Many disputes can be avoided when we simply recognize theocratic order and keep our proper place. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-27) When wives respect the wishes of their husbands, children the orders of their parents, ministerial servants the direction from elders, their actions make "for the growth of the [congregation] for the building up of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:16) Granted, at times husbands, parents, and elders fall short. (Romans 3:23) But does rebelling, complaining, or resisting well-motivated directions improve the situation? How much better it is to keep our place assigned by God and seek peace!

14, 15. (a) What sort of issues have at times disturbed the peace of congregations? (b) How can peace be pursued when disagreements occur?
16. What is the value of recognizing theocratic order in the home and in the congregation?

Exerting Ourselves in the Field

[17] For many, though, the greatest challenge is fulfilling the Christian commission to preach the good news. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Some have but a minimal share in the field service, perhaps arguing that the pressures of earning a living and raising a family make it difficult for them to do more. Granted, the pressures of "the last days" are formidable. (2 Timothy 3:1) Jesus, however, warned against becoming 'weighed down with anxieties of life.' As conditions worsen, Christians should 'raise themselves erect and lift their heads up.' (Luke 21:28, 34) One of the best ways to "stand firm" against Satan's attacks is to have our "feet shod with the equipment of the good news"—regularly sharing in preaching!—Ephesians 6:14, 15.

[18] Back in Paul's day, many Christians (at least in some congregations) were "seeking their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:21) Could this be true of some in our midst today? Perhaps they fail to view seeking the Kingdom as did that man who found a "pearl of high value" for which he would make any sacrifice. (Matthew 13:45, 46) Yielding to self-interest, they take the line of least resistance and offer merely token service. Remember, though, love for Jehovah and for fellowman motivates true

17. (a) What reasons do some give for having only a token share in the preaching work? (b) How did Jesus encourage Christians to respond to today's pressures?
18. What might be the reason some hold back from having a full share in the preaching work?

Christians to preach, even if starting to talk with strangers goes against our natural inclination.—Matthew 22:37-39.

[19] If we are not moved to preach, then our love for Jehovah and our trust in him is little more than mental awareness. "Know the God of your father and serve him with a complete heart," David exhorted Solomon, "for all hearts Jehovah is searching, and every inclination of the thoughts he is discerning." (1 Chronicles 28:9) Jehovah is not fooled by lukewarm efforts. Even a regular share in field service does not satisfy him if we offer only a mere token of what we could do if we were 'exerting ourselves vigorously.' (Luke 13:24) Each Christian must thus make an honest appraisal of his share in the field service and ask himself: 'Am I really doing all I can?' Perhaps adjustments in our priorities need to be made.

Motivated to "Do Good" by the Examples of Others

[20] Our service to God is not done in "comparison with the other person." (Galatians 6:4) Nevertheless, the good examples of others can often motivate us to do more. The apostle Paul himself said: "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1) Consider, then, how much time our brothers are spending in the field service each month. In the United States, the average hours for publishers has risen from 8.3 hours in 1979 to 9.7 hours in 1987! Our brothers have been steadily increasing the time they spend in the field. Is that true of you?

[21] Moved by the zealous examples of others, record numbers are entering the regular pioneer work. In California (U.S.A.) a young sister named Angela received a tempting job offer, including a scholarship to the college of her choice. Angela, instead, opted for the full-time ministry. Her reason? "By associating with many pioneers, I could see a really deep joy and satisfaction not just with themselves but in their relationship with Jehovah. I wanted to have this deep joy and satisfaction."

[22] Do you want "deep joy and satisfaction"? Then "trust in Jehovah and do good"! Let what you know move you to do your utmost in Jehovah's service. Practicing the things learned will make your spiritual advancement manifest to all and will benefit others in a lifesaving way. (1 Timothy 4:15, 16) May all, therefore, respond to the words of Paul at Philippians 4:9: "The things that you learned as well as accepted and heard and saw in connection with me, practice these; and the God of peace will be with you."

19. Why is Jehovah displeased with lukewarm efforts, and how might we evaluate our own service to him?
20. Why is it appropriate to examine the good examples set by fellow Christians?
21. What has moved many to enter the pioneer work? Illustrate.
22. What are the benefits of practicing the things learned?

Points for Review

- ☐ What should be our response to peering into the mirror of God's Word?
- ☐ How might we improve in our manner of dealing with others?
- ☐ Why is it unwise to pursue material things?
- ☐ How can we seek peace in the congregation?
- ☐ What should motivate us to have a full share in the field service?

"Go out from your land and from your relatives"

IN November 1981, Tony and his wife, Margaret, along with their two children, aged 9 and 11, moved from England to the west of Ireland. Why? To assist in the public teaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses. Only a few weeks later, they were facing difficulties. It was a bitter cold winter. Work expectations had not materialized, so Tony had started a chimney-cleaning business. Not yet very skilled, he returned home covered with soot after a hard day's work. Imagine his dismay when he found that the water pipes had all frozen solid, and he had only a small kettle of water with which to wash! "Just for a moment I began to wonder why we had moved away from our home and our relatives," he admitted.

To move away from family and friends to serve God more fully, and then to keep going despite difficulties, takes real faith. Someone who showed such faith almost 4,000 years ago was the patriarch Abraham. The disciple Stephen said of him: "The God of glory appeared to our forefather Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he took up residence in Haran, and [God] said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your relatives and come on into the land I shall show you.'"—Acts 7: 2, 3.

Of course, no one today has such a specific command from God to move away from his or her homeland. Thousands of Christians in this 20th century, however, have arranged their affairs to do what Abraham did—move to new areas to further God's interests. (Matthew 24:14; 28: 19, 20; Romans 10:13-15) They have recognized that "the field is the world" and that many places have a great need for more help. (Matthew 13:38) Like Isaiah, they have responded with vigor to Jehovah's words, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Seeing the need, they too have replied, "Here I am! Send me."—Isaiah 6:8.

Why Do They Do It?

What sort of people make such a move? They are not from any particular age-group or background, nor do they claim exceptional abilities. They are just people who, for one thing, are willing to subordinate personal desires and comforts in the interest of God's Kingdom. It is as with Abraham when he moved away from the materially prosperous and comfortable city of Ur to live in tents in an alien land. —Hebrews 11:8-10.

"We could always see the need to do as much as possible in Jehovah's service," said one couple who moved with their two teenage sons in 1983. "We felt as the apostle Paul did when he said, 'The time left is reduced'; therefore we decided to 'step over into Ireland' and help with the work there." (1 Corinthians 7:29; compare Acts 16:9.) According to one free translation, the sense of the apostle Paul's words

at 1 Corinthians 7:29 is: "The important thing to remember is that our remaining time is very short," and so are our opportunities for doing the Lord's work. (*The Living Bible*) Many faithful Christians have moved wherever they are needed in order to seize these opportunities before such vanish and to make the best use of the precious time remaining.

"We saw this as a fine opportunity always to 'have plenty to do in the work of the Lord.'" (1 Corinthians 15:58) "We wanted to serve Jehovah where we could do the most good." "We felt that we were in a position financially to move and that if we could fill a need somewhere, it would be wrong for us not to do it." Such expressions describe the feelings of many who have taken steps to serve where they are needed more. These Christians have taken to heart the admonition found at Proverbs 3:9, 27: "Honor Jehovah with your valuable things and with the firstfruits of all your produce. Do not hold back good from those to whom it is owing, when it happens to be in the power of your hand to do it." Having carefully examined their circumstances, they have decided that it 'is in the power of their hands to do' lasting good to their neighbors in other parts of the world. —See also Romans 1:14, 15; Luke 10: 27-37.

You may be in a position to make such a move. If so, you will be interested in the way that some who have already moved answer the following questions.

What Should Be Considered Before Moving?

Before moving, consult with the elders in your own congregation. Find out what they think about your plans. (Proverbs 24:6) There may be reasons why such a move would not be advisable in your case, and they will help you to assess your situation properly. For example, a person who moves should be spiritually strong if he wants to be an asset and not a liability in the new location.

Work through the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in the country to which you hope to move—or through your local branch office if you hope to move within your own country. If it is possible, make a visit to the proposed area to get to know something of the land and the people before you make a final decision.

Analyze your motives before moving. Abraham moved because he had a deep desire to fulfill the will of God, not because of a spirit of adventure or a personal whim or fancy. Carefully weigh all the factors involved. Might there be a language problem? Can you adjust to a different culture and climate? Have you any special health needs? Are all family members involved wholeheartedly behind the move? Have you organized your financial affairs so that you can make such a move successfully? (Compare Luke 14:28.) These and many other factors require careful and prayerful consideration.—Ephesians 6:18.

What Difficulties May Have to Be Faced?

Even before moving, you may have to face difficulties. Not everyone will see things as you do. You may hear thoughtless or negative comments. Remember, though, even the apostle Peter reacted negatively when he heard what was to happen to Jesus. Instead of encouraging Jesus to be steadfast in doing Jehovah's will, Peter said: "Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all." Like Jesus, be resolved to resist any such negative talk.—Matthew 16:22, 23.

After you get settled in the new area, homesickness may be a major problem. Love for Jehovah and for the people who need to hear the good news of his Kingdom will help you to cope with this. Many prob-

lems can be lessened if you truly make your new location your home. Avoid making negative comparisons with your previous home, as doing so can cause discontent and resentment. When facing difficulties, remember Jehovah's invitation at Malachi 3:10: "Test me out, please, . . . whether I shall not open to you people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing until there is no more want."

What Blessings Can Be Enjoyed?

As your involvement in the work of declaring the good news grows, so the quality of your ministry will grow. You will develop more skills as a teacher of God's Word. This will bring benefits not only to you but also to all who listen to you. (1 Timothy 4:15, 16) What a privilege it is to conduct home Bible studies and to help free honesthearted people from Babylonish false teachings! You can have the joy described by the apostle Paul when he wrote to some whom he had helped to become Christians: "What is our hope or joy or crown of exultation—why, is it not in fact you?"

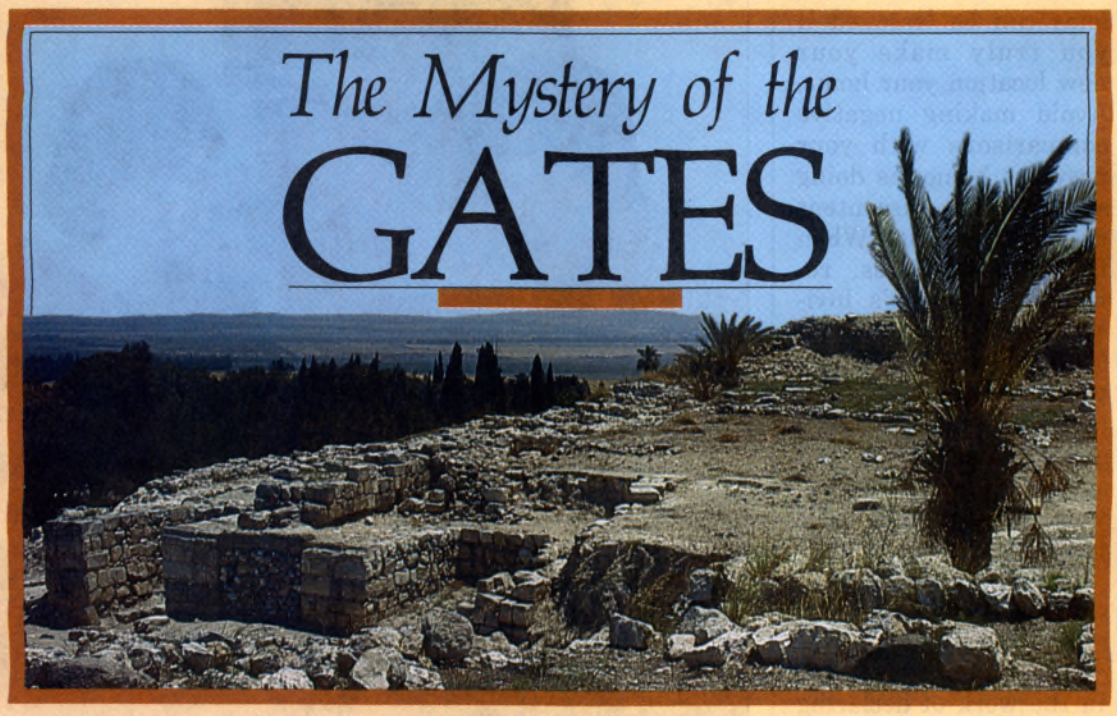
Family discussion can make for a more successful move

(1 Thessalonians 2:19) Yes, it is a joy and a blessing to have a share in helping individuals and congregations to prosper spiritually.

Abraham was called "Jehovah's friend" because he readily obeyed God's direction. (James 2:21-23; Isaiah 41:8) You too can deepen your personal relationship with God. As you exert yourself in his service, you will experience his loving care and support. You will understand more fully what the psalmist meant when he said: "Taste and see that Jehovah is good, O you people."—Psalm 34:8.

Tony, Margaret, and their children faced problems when they moved to serve Jehovah more fully. But with Jehovah's help, they successfully handled these. "We didn't allow difficulties to rob us of our joy," they said. "In situations like the ones we faced, we learned to rely on Jehovah more, and we saw his hand in everything as one problem after another melted away." Thousands of modern-day servants of Jehovah have shown similar faith by moving wherever there is a greater need. Can you do the same?

The Mystery of the GATES



MANY people are intrigued by a mystery—a story with a puzzle, with clues that can be read in various ways, and with a surprise ending, maybe the finding of a treasure. If you are, you will enjoy 'The Mystery of the Gates.'

This mystery began to surface at Megiddo, a strategic city that dominated trade and military routes in the ancient Middle East. Archaeologists uncovered the remains of a monumental defensive gate, which the evidence convinced them was from King Solomon's time. What was it like? The clues began.

Look to the right at the model of ancient Megiddo, and especially at the highlighted gate area. An ancient traveler or an attacking army ascending the road to the fortified city first came to a foregate. Inside that was a plaza, or courtyard. In it any attackers would be exposed as they advanced and turned left to reach the main defensive gate, which is at the heart of our mystery.

Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

Fortified towers formed the front sides of the gate. The entire gate structure was built, not of fieldstone or of brick, but of the ashlar (carefully hewn stone blocks) that was typical of Solomon's period. But there was a distinctive style inside the gate. On the sides of a long vestibule were massive pilasters, or masonry piers, that

Based on 1 Kings 9:15, archaeologists found at Hazor a gate of the same size and shape as that in Megiddo

formed six chambers where guards might be stationed. (Compare Ezekiel 40:6, 10, 20, 21, 28, 29.) In normal times, a chariot or group of merchants could easily pass, yet it would be a different matter for attackers who managed to batter through the heavy main doors. The masonry piers would force attackers into a narrow passage, to run a gauntlet of armed men, the cream of Megiddo's army, in the chambers right and left.

Now the mystery shifts north of the Sea of Galilee to the tell, or mound, of ancient Hazor, where Professor John Garstang excavated in 1928. Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin turned to this huge tell in 1955. He had in mind a Biblical statement that reads: "This is the account of those conscripted for forced labor that King Solomon levied to build the house of Jehovah and . . . the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer." (1 Kings 9:15) It seemed logical that Solomon's engineers would follow a master plan for similar fortifications in other cities they rebuilt. Did such Solomonic gates exist at Hazor?

As Yadin's workers progressed in their excavations, they found a casemate wall, a double wall with rooms in between. Then a large structure connected to the walls began to appear. Yadin says: "We immediately realized that we had discovered the gate . . . Furthermore, it was soon evident that the gate's plan—comprising six chambers and two towers—as well as its dimensions were identical to those of the gate discovered [many years] earlier at Megiddo . . . Excitement in our camp intensified . . . We traced the plan of the Megiddo gate on the ground, marking it with pegs to denote corners and walls, and then instructed our labourers to dig according to the marking, promising: 'here you will find a wall,' or 'there you will find a chamber.' When our 'prophecies' proved correct, our prestige went up tremendously . . . When we read [to them] the biblical verse about Solomon's activities in Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer, our prestige took a dive, but that of the Bible rose sky-high!"

—Hazor: The Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible.

It seemed that the mystery of the gates was being solved precisely as expected according to the clues in the Bible. Yet, what about Gezer, to the south? Yadin knew that Irish archaeologist R. A. S. Macalister, who had excavated there between 1902 and 1909, had found nothing that was assigned to Solomon. Might important clues have been overlooked in what even Yadin called "The Mystery of Gezer"?

He relates: "The discoveries at Hazor and the famous passage in 1 Kings led me to a fresh examination of Macalister's report in the hope of locating a gate. One can well imagine my astonishment and unbounded excitement when . . . I came across a layout . . . entitled 'Plan of the Maccabean Castle of Gezer.'" Macalister dated the remains of that "castle" to the rebellion of the Jewish Maccabees (second century B.C.E.). But Yadin thought that he could see in this old drawing 'a casemate wall, an outer gatehouse, and even more important what looked like half of a city gate, exactly like those found in Megiddo and Hazor.' Yadin published an article on these clues. Later, Dr. William G. Dever excavated at Gezer. The result? Dever excitedly wrote: "Solomon did indeed re-build Gezer!" Or as Yadin puts it: "Sure enough, not only did Dever's team find the other half of the gate, but the stratigraphy and pottery demonstrated conclusively that the complex had been built in Solomon's times."

So the mystery was solved. Yadin observed in *The Biblical Archaeologist* (Volume XXXIII, 1970, 3): "With the aid of the brief biblical passage from Kings, the Solomonic fortifications, identical in plan in the three cities, were located and dated." "Indeed, it seems that there is no example in the history of archaeology where a passage helped so much in identifying and dating structures in several of the most important tells . . . as has 1 Kings 9:15."

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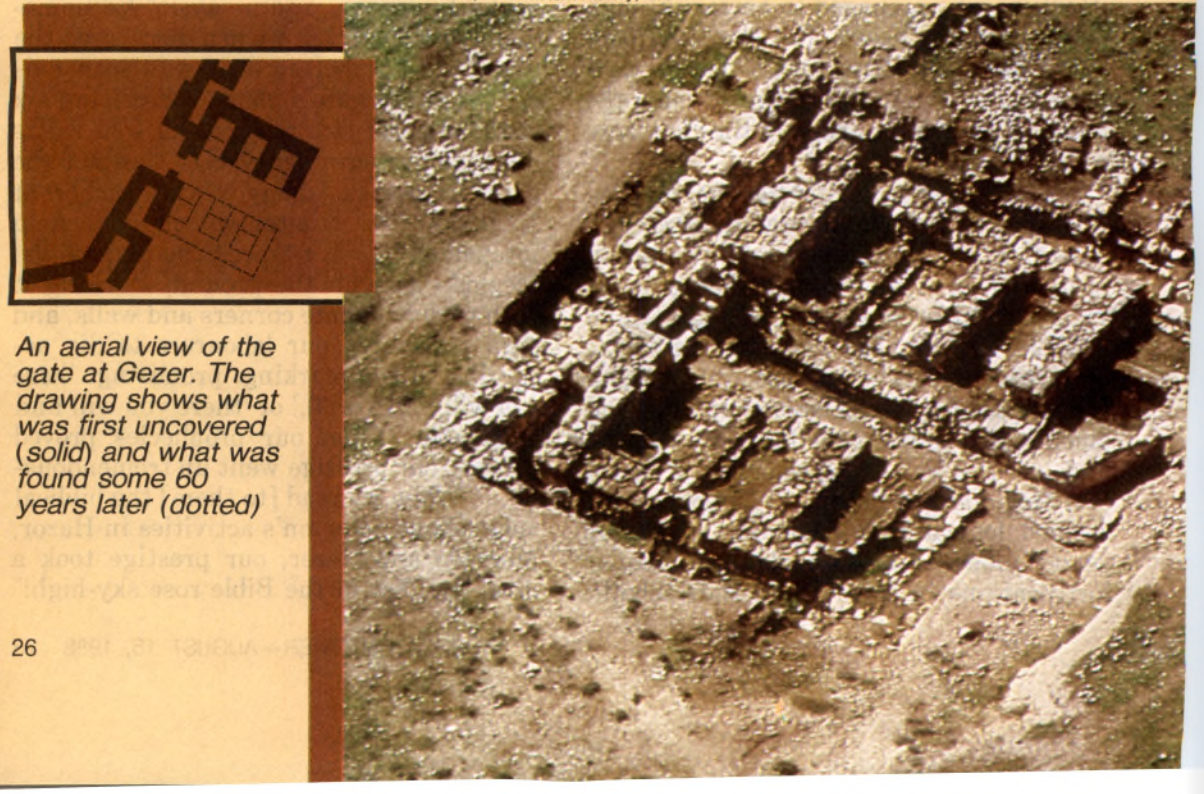

An aerial view of the gate at Gezer. The drawing shows what was first uncovered (solid) and what was found some 60 years later (dotted)

Do You Remember?

Have you found the recent issues of *The Watchtower* of practical value to you? Why not test your memory with the following questions?

□ What is the answer to today's problem of teenage pregnancy?

Youths must be given moral and spiritual guidance. The Bible shows that parents have the responsibility to do this. (Ephesians 6:4)—4/15, page 4.

□ What makes it difficult to raise children successfully?

Parents and children are imperfect and, hence, make mistakes. (Romans 5:12) Also, growing children are very much influenced by the bad tendencies of present-day society; this adversely affects their values and outlook on life. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) —5/1, page 4.

□ What are four striking differences between true Christians and nominal Christians?

True Christians abstain from blood. (Acts 15:28, 29) They maintain a high moral standard. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Genuine Christians remain neutral toward politics and the many national conflicts. (John 17:16) Those who follow Jesus use his example as a model for their domestic relations. (Ephesians 5:21-25) —5/1, pages 17-19.

□ Why did the Jews call Jesus a Samaritan? (John 8:48)

The Jews hated the Samaritans. Hence, the term was used by them as an expression of contempt and reproach against Jesus.—5/15, page 8.

□ What is the "pure language" spoken about at Zephaniah 3:9?

This is the language of Scriptural truth that enables God-fearing people of all nations and races to serve Jehovah shoulder to shoulder.—5/15, page 16.

□ What freedoms result from developing a relationship with God?

Freedom from the enslaving fear of man and from the burdensome customs that have no real meaning or value. (Proverbs 29:25) Also, freedom from the fear of death. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; John 5:28, 29)—6/1, pages 5-6.

□ What did Jesus mean when he said: "The night is coming when no man can work"? (John 9:4)

Jesus was here referring to the time when he would go into the grave and would no longer be able to perform the marvelous works that he had performed while alive.—6/1, page 8.

□ What does water baptism signify?

Complete immersion in water is a fitting symbol of a person's dedication to God, whereby the individual becomes an ordained minister. While under the water, he, in effect, dies to his former course of life, and on coming out of the water, he becomes, as it were, alive to a new course of self-sacrifice in Jehovah's service. (Compare Romans 6:2-4; 12:1; Philippians 3:16.)—6/15, page 29.

□ What are some ways to demonstrate thankfulness to Jehovah?

When thankfulness is strong, an impelling desire to serve God wells up in the appreciative heart. One way to satisfy this desire is to engage in the ministry, perhaps in the pioneer service. Another is to cooperate in the building program now taking place around the earth.—7/1, page 11.

□ Why did Jesus empower 70 of his disciples to cure the sick when he sent them out on a preaching campaign in Galilee?

These disciples, by performing such miracles, prepared the way for Jesus to do follow-up work. The miracles they performed would make many of the householders eager to meet Jesus and listen to his Kingdom message. —7/1, pages 16-17.

□ Was Jesus referring to Judas when he told Pilate: "The man that handed me over to you has greater sin"?—John 19:11.

It seems that Jesus was referring to all those who were responsible for his being on trial before Pilate. That certainly included Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus. (Luke 22:2-6) But the high priest Caiaphas and other religious leaders were also involved in bringing about Jesus' arrest. (Matthew 26: 59-65; 27:1, 2, 20-23) Likely all these guilty ones were included in what Jesus said at John 19:11. —7/15, page 30.

□ What particularly lethal danger is connected with image worship?

The psalmist said of the Israelites: "Serving the pagans' idols, they found themselves trapped into sacrificing their own sons and daughters to demons." (Psalm 106:36, 37, *The Jerusalem Bible*) The Christian Greek Scriptures warn of the same danger. (1 Corinthians 10:19, 20) Image worship of any sort opens up the possibility that an image will serve as a contact point for demonic forces.—8/1, page 6.

Maintaining Our Christian ONENESS

"IMAGINE you are called brother or sister," wrote Catholic writer Domenico Mosso, "not by the priest, but by the middle-aged gentleman next to you or by the fair young lady who has just arrived at your right. 'I beg your pardon?' 'I said, good morning brother.' 'How do you dare . . . I don't know you at all, so how come all this familiarity? After all, we are in church.'"

A real sense of brotherhood is indeed missing within the churches of Christendom. This reflects their lack of Christian unity. Not so with Jehovah's Witnesses, however. Like early followers of Jesus, we freely call one another brother and sister. (2 Peter 3:15) No matter where we go in the world, a warm, brotherly reception is as near as the closest Kingdom Hall. Unity is also manifest in the fact that all congregations follow the same pattern of instruction and that all Witnesses are engaged in the preaching of the "good news of the kingdom."—Matthew 24:14.

On the night before he died, Jesus Christ prayed: "I make request . . . concerning those putting faith in me through their word; in order that they may all be *one,* just as you, Father, are in union with me and I am in union with you." (John 17: 20, 21) The Bible record shows that Jehovah God answered Jesus' prayer. Among early Christians, long-standing animosities between Jews and Gentiles dissipated through the unifying force of Christ's teachings.—Galatians 3:28.

However, it took effort to maintain this unity. The apostle Paul entreated his fellow workers "to walk worthily of the [heavenly] calling . . . earnestly endeavoring to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace." They were not to split up into various sects. No, "one body there is, and one spirit, even as you were called in the one hope to which you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all." The apostles, shepherds, and teachers in the congregation were provided to help "all attain to the oneness in the faith." —Ephesians 4:1-6, 11-14.

Jehovah's Witnesses in modern times have successfully maintained this "oneness." However, various factors—the spirit of independence, cultural and racial differences, various flaws and imperfections among fellow Christians—could threaten our "oneness in the faith." How can it be maintained?

Feeding at the Same Table

Jehovah does not illuminate each Christian individually. Rather, Christ appointed the "faithful and discreet slave" class to provide Scriptural study material and timely counsel to Christians through-

out the world. (Matthew 24:45-47) *The Watchtower* is thus published in 103 languages to help meet that worldwide need.

Feeding at the same spiritual table has done much to produce and maintain oneness of faith. At times, however, some of the counsel may not seem to apply in certain lands. Should we feel that we do not need this information? Hardly. Some of the warnings of Paul to Christians living in the immoral, idolatrous city of Corinth may not have seemed fully applicable to Christians living in the rurals. (1 Corinthians 6:15, 16; 10:14) Yet, Christians everywhere viewed Paul's writings as part of "the Scriptures."—2 Peter 3:16.

Likewise today, certain articles may not seem as applicable to local circumstances as others do. But we should still welcome the advance warning, knowing that in our age of fast communication, unhealthy trends started in one part of the world can spread quickly!

Imperfections and Extremes of Viewpoint

Said the disciple James: "We all stumble many times." (James 3:2) Because of imperfection, humans are also prone to extremes. This may not seem to be a problem if people share the same viewpoints. For example, two extremely fastidious individuals may get along just fine. But if one is slovenly and the other fastidious, there could be no end of quarreling!

Jehovah's Witnesses come "out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues." (Revelation 7:9) As a result, individuals among us may have vastly different ideas about such matters as diet, clothing, health care, and even social etiquette. Such contrasting viewpoints need not drive a wedge between us. The Bible warns against extremes and encourages us to work toward balance and reasonableness. "The wisdom from above is . . . peaceable, reasonable," says the Bible. —James 3:17.

True, the Bible does very specifically condemn certain practices. But often it simply encourages us to take a middle course between two extremes. Consider what the Bible says on the following subjects:

Secular Work: "Laziness causes a deep sleep to fall, and a slack soul goes hungry." (Proverbs 19:15) "You cannot slave for God and for Riches."—Matthew 6:24.

Talking: "The one keeping his lips in check is acting discreetly." (Proverbs 10: 19) "For everything there is an appointed time . . . a time to keep quiet and a time to speak."—Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7.

Socializing: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) "Make your foot rare at the house of your fellowman, that he may not have his sufficiency of you."—Proverbs 25:17.

Child Rearing: "The one holding back his rod is hating his son, but the one loving him is he that does look for him with discipline." (Proverbs 13:24) "Do not be exasperating your children, so that they do not become downhearted."—Colossians 3:21.

The more our viewpoints are balanced rather than extreme, the less conflict with other Christians we will experience. But what if disagreements still surface because of imperfection? Remember Paul's words at Colossians 3:13: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint."

'He Stumbled Me'

Some in the congregation, however, may tend to be extremely sensitive, reading unkind motives into innocent

words and gestures. Perhaps this is due to their background. Whatever the case, how regrettable it is when such overly sensitive ones allow themselves to be offended by trifles or, worse yet, disturb others about the matter by sowing seeds of disunity!

True, the Bible condemns conduct that could stumble other disciples. (Luke 17: 1, 2) And mature ones should be sensitive to the feelings of fellow Christians. At the same time, the Bible strongly counsels us against being overly sensitive and magnifying offenses in our mind. (Ecclesiastes 7:9) Furthermore, spreading discontent among our brothers by exposing someone's shortcomings is one of the things "Jehovah does hate."—Proverbs 6:16-19.

God's spirit can help us overcome oversensitivity. Rather than dwelling on our brothers' flaws, we can, with the spirit's help, think positive, upbuilding thoughts. (Philippians 4:8) This promotes unity.

Maintaining good relations, even when one has a basis for taking offense, is vital to unity

Unity Is Not Uniformity

Worldwide unity, however, does not mean the stifling of individuality or the crushing of initiative. Where Bible principles apply, we are glad to forsake the independent thinking patterns of this world and to accept the leading of Jehovah's spirit. Still, in carrying out our commission as preachers, there is much room for individuality and, yes, imagination. Indeed, our brothers often use great ingenuity in adapting their methods of witnessing to local circumstances.

Then there is a wide field of activities where Scriptural principles are not directly involved, including certain local customs. In continental Europe, people frequently shake hands. In parts of the Far East, they bow. Either is acceptable to Christians. Or consider dress and grooming. The Bible gives only basic guidelines of modesty and balance. Within those, we may follow our own preferences, while exercising "soundness of mind."—1 Timothy 2:9, 10.

Thus, elders should be careful always to give counsel on the firm ground of Bible principles instead of on personal preferences. Of course, when it comes to spiritual matters, they will be at the forefront of promoting real unity. We can do our part too. We can 'keep testing whether we are in the faith' by regular study of the Bible and the publications of the 'faithful slave.' (2 Corinthians 13:5) We can maintain oneness in works by boldly making a "public declaration" of our faith.—Hebrews 13:15.

In this way we will heed the inspired counsel: "Now I exhort you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought."—1 Corinthians 1:10.

Insight on the News

Flood Not Exaggerated

The Biblical account of a global flood has long been criticized as based more on fiction than on fact. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* asserts: "It is generally agreed now that the episode of Noe and the ark is not a piece of historical reporting but an imaginative literary creation of another form entirely." Some skeptics have argued that all the moisture in the atmosphere would cause only a *few inches* of global rain.

But according to the Genesis account, the source of the floodwaters was not simply the moisture in the atmosphere. At Genesis 1:6 we are told that the Creator decreed: "Let an [atmospheric] expanse come to be in between the waters and let a dividing occur between the waters [of the seas] and the waters [above the expanse]." The waters suspended above the expanse evidently remained there until the Flood. According to the apostle Peter, the atmospheric "heavens" and the waters above and beneath them were the means by which "the world of [Noah's] time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water."—2 Peter 3:5, 6; Genesis 1:7.

The devastating effects of a watery deluge were felt recently in South Africa when a flood struck the province of Natal and claimed more than 300 lives. Commenting on the disaster, conservationist K. H. Cooper observed: "I have often wondered what would happen in this day and age if it were to rain for 40 days and 40 nights non-stop. . . . Could such a rain have obliterated almost all life on earth? Having recently seen what happened after just four days of rain in Natal," Cooper continued, "I'm now convinced of the authenticity of the Old Testament story."

Concern for the Poor?

How can the gap that separates the poor from the rich be bridged? This was the issue considered by Pope John Paul II in a recent encyclical entitled *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (The Social Concern). The pope held that the church should feel obliged to relieve the misery of those who are suffering. How? "Faced by cases of need, one cannot ignore them in favour of superfluous church ornaments and costly furnishings for divine worship; on the contrary it could be obligatory to sell these goods in order to provide food, drink, clothing and shelter for those who lack these things."

However, commenting on the pope's encyclical, Vatican expert Domenico Del Rio observed in *La Repubblica:* "It is clear that people will now be waiting to see the . . . pope himself, and those round about him, set the example. The Vatican basilica and the basilicas of Rome are full of 'costly furnishings,' perhaps also of 'superfluous church ornaments.'" Yet, according to *Fortune* magazine, "Vatican officials bristle at the idea of parting with so much as a Grecian urn to raise cash."

When Jesus instructed a wealthy ruler to 'sell all his belongings and distribute the money to the poor,' that man was unwilling to do so. He "went off grieved, for he was holding many possessions." Rightly, Jesus warned: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."—Mark 10:21, 22; Matthew 6:21.

Annual Meeting

October 1, 1988

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 1, 1988, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:30 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the Corporation should inform the Secretary's Office now of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them shortly after August 15.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 1. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other locations.

They Were Surprised to See Me Reading Them

A youth from the Philippines writes: "I am a first year high school student and a fervent Catholic. When a friend introduced me to the *Awake!* and *The Watchtower*, I happened to accept them. I find them very interesting even though they are published by Jehovah's Witnesses. As I read them in our classroom, my classmates were surprised, since I am a Catholic. I gave my classmates one, and they also liked it. The magazine also reached my religion teacher, and this teacher showed interest, since it dealt with today's moral problems. I hope you will continue this printing."