

The **Watchtower**
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

November 1, 1988

**Will There
Always Be
WARS?**

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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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Will There Always Be WARS?

ON JULY 1, 1916, in the pleasant farming region of Picardy in Northern France, the First Battle of the Somme began. After tremendous artillery bombardments and aerial attacks, the British and the French forces launched what they hoped would be a decisive breakthrough of the entrenched German armies that faced them. But there was no breakthrough. Instead, on the first day, 20,000 British soldiers were killed. As the weeks dragged on, the battle continued with still no breakthrough. In October torrential rains turned the battlefield into a sea of mud. By mid-November the Allies had advanced a mere five miles. Meantime, 450,000 German, 200,000 French, and 420,000 British lives had been lost. More than a million soldiers, most of them young men, perished in that battle!

This was merely an episode in the first world war. And the first world war was only one—albeit the worst up until then—of the innumerable wars that have been fought throughout history. What a senseless waste of human life!

Why do humans insist on killing one another in this way? There are many factors involved, among which we could mention selfishness, ambition, greed, as well as a lust for power and prestige. An-

other cause of warfare has been nationalism. Indeed, warfare reflects the accuracy of the observation on human history found in the Bible: "Man has dominated man to his injury." —Ecclesiastes 8:9.

Religion too has often fomented war. The crusades of the Middle Ages were fought by religious nations for an ostensibly religious purpose: to win back Palestine for Christendom. In both world wars of this century, clergy from different denominations have tried to harness the religious feelings of the soldiers to make them more willing to kill their contemporaries on the other side. And some of the conflicts that are raging right now have a strongly religious aspect.

Gleams of Hope

Is there any hope that one day wars will cease? Yes, there is. Jesus Christ is called the "Prince of Peace." When he came to earth, he lived up to this name, teaching people to love their neighbors as themselves. He even told them to love their enemies. (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 5:44; 22:39) As a result, those who paid heed to his teachings in the first century became a peaceful, international brotherhood. It was unthinkable for them to wage war on one another. Unfortunately, however, the pure faith of these early Christians was later contaminated. In time, churches meddled in politics and their hands came to be drenched with the blood of the wars of the nations.

Much later, winds of change began to blow over Europe. It seemed as though mankind was becoming tired of incessant warfare. In 1899 and again in 1907, international conventions were held in The Hague, the Netherlands. At the convention of 1899, an agreement was adopted for the "Pacific [peaceful] Settlement of International Disputes." So as the 20th century dawned, many hoped that the world would gradually outgrow its penchant for waging war. Such hopes, however, were shattered by the guns of the first world war. Did this mean that mankind's hopes for peace would never be fulfilled?



The War to End WARS

A HUGE German zeppelin droned through the night sky. It was returning home after a raid on London, and as it passed over a village in Essex, bombs were dropped. One of them killed a nurse on leave from the war in France.

This was a minor episode of World War I, but it had huge implications. It was an example of how the 20th century, far from ushering in a time when man would 'learn war no more,' has seen a tremendous growth in both the weapons and the arenas of warfare. (Isaiah 2:2-4) For thousands of years, wars had been fought on land and on the surface of the sea. But in World War I, the fighting spread up into the atmosphere and down under the surface of the sea. As a result, civilians who were hundreds of miles from the battle lines were killed by bombs, and many ships were sent to the bottom of the ocean by unseen submarines.

Indeed, during that first terrible world war, 8 million soldiers died in the fighting, and an estimated 12 million civilians died from causes that included starvation and exposure. "The tragedy of the Great War [World War I]," according to historian H. A. L. Fisher, "was that it was fought between the most highly civilized peoples in Europe on an issue which a few level-headed men could easily have composed." To justify the horrendous slaughter, it was called the "war to end wars." But that phrase soon came to sound very hollow.

A Peace Organization

Once peace was declared in 1918, an embittered generation demanded that steps be taken to ensure that such a war could never happen again. Thus, the League of Nations was born in 1919. But the League was a great disappointment. In 1939 the world was again plunged into world war—a war that was even more deadly than the first.

In World War II, many cities were reduced to rubble, turning civilian life into a nightmare. Then in 1945 atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ushering man into the nuclear



age. The hideous mushroom clouds that rose over those two Japanese cities were harbingers of a threat that has hung over mankind ever since.

However, even before those bombs fell, preparations were being made for setting up an organization like the defunct League of Nations. The result was the United Nations Organization, which basically had the same objective as its predecessor—that of maintaining world peace. What has it achieved? Well, there has been no world war since 1945, but there have been numerous smaller wars in which millions of people have died.

Does this mean that mankind will never see the fulfillment of God's promise through Isaiah that men 'will learn war no more'? No. It merely means that this will not be brought about by man. The Bible, which is called 'a light to our roadway,' is the book that contains that inspired promise. And it is the Bible that shows that none other than God himself will finally make all wars to cease.—Psalm 119:105.

An End to All Wars

As mentioned in the preceding article, there was a group in the first century that established an international brotherhood in which it would have been unthinkable for one member to war against his brother or sister. This was the Christian congregation, whose members in a very literal sense had 'beaten their swords into plowshares.' Today, while mankind as a whole can make no headway in abolishing war, there is again a group of people who have achieved this same remarkable goal. Who are they?

In the years before 1914, this small group had confidence in the Bible. Hence, they knew that men's efforts to abolish war would not succeed. From their study of the Bible, they learned that the year 1914 would be a turning point in

human history, and they gave warning of this for 40 years. True to Bible prophecy, 1914 was the beginning of a time marked by famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, as well as war. (Matthew 24:3, 7, 8; Luke 21:10, 11) Concerning World War I, historian James Cameron wrote: "In 1914 the world, as it was known and accepted then, came to an end."

Before that war ended, a terrible flu epidemic struck on a global scale and killed 20 million people—more than twice the number of soldiers that died in the war itself. Since then, diseases such as cancer and, more recently, AIDS have terrified mankind.

Now note another Bible prophecy: "And because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matthew 24:12) Is this being fulfilled? Surely! Daily, the media expose worldwide lawlessness: murders, muggings, and general mayhem. Furthermore, a political forecast concerning World War II was that it would bring "freedom from fear." In contrast, the Bible accurately foretold that men would "become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." (Luke 21:26) Once again human predictions were wrong, and God's prophetic words true.

The Chief Warmonger

A warmonger is one who foments war. Politicians, clergymen, and even businessmen have played this role. But the greatest warmonger is none other than Satan the Devil, called in the Scriptures "the god of this system of things." —2 Corinthians 4:4.

Satan rebelled against Jehovah God millennia ago, and later he seduced a host of angels into joining him. But in 1914 his time was up. The Bible tells us: "War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and

the dragon and its angels battled but it did not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him.”—Revelation 12:7-9.

This explains why the earth has been such a dangerous place since 1914. The Bible foretold the result of Satan’s downfall: “Woe for the earth . . . because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time.” (Revelation 12:12) How short a time? Jesus said: “This generation [the one seeing the events starting in 1914] will by no means pass away until all these things occur.” (Matthew 24:34) What things? All the disasters and turmoil that Jesus prophesied for our day.

However, the Bible shows that in spite of the debacle of the League of Nations and the present impotence of the United Nations Organization, the nations would not cease their own efforts to make peace. Indeed, the time will come when they will think they have succeeded. There will be a great cry of “peace and security,” but this is to be followed by the “sudden destruction” of this corrupt world. Being in the dark, men will be taken by surprise by this turn of events, which will come “as a thief in the night.”—1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3.

What will this lead to? To the war that really is a “war to end wars”: the battle of Armageddon, called in the Bible “the war of the great day of God the Almighty.” This will mean destruction of all evil elements and their supporters. “Evildoers themselves will be cut off.” (Revelation 16:14-16; Psalm 37:9) Finally, Satan, the great warmonger, will be confined in a place where he can have no further influence on humans. Eventually, he too

is to be destroyed.—Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10.

Notice, however, that this will not be a war of mindless destruction with senseless slaughter of innocent and guilty alike. There will be survivors, and these will be ones who are “rendering [God] sacred service day and night.” Yes, those who cease to learn war even now and who follow the peaceful ways of a true Christian will survive this last, great war. Will they be many? The Bible calls them “a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.”—Revelation 7:9, 14, 15.

After the Storm

What a relief these will feel! Instead of many nationalistic governments, there will be only one government: the Kingdom of God. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10) Instead of the proud and ambitious, the meek will inherit the earth and “find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.” (Psalm 37:10, 11) “God himself . . . will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.” (Revelation 21:3, 4) Jehovah will make “wars to cease to the extremity of the earth.” Swords will be beaten into plowshares, spears into pruning shears, and “they will not learn war anymore.”—Psalm 46:8, 9; Isaiah 2:4.

Would you not like to live in such a world? Of course you would! Well, the possibility is there. The first step is to study God’s Word, the Bible, and assure yourself that this hope is true and soundly based. Then, find out from the Bible what God’s will is for you now and act accordingly. True, study means effort, but it is worth it. Jesus said that the knowledge you gain, if you use it properly, will mean “everlasting life.” (John 17:3) Is there anything more important than that?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

A Husband's Perseverance Unites a Family

WHAT would you do if you accepted the truth and then your mate bitterly opposed you and did everything within her power to break your integrity? Would you be strengthened by Paul's words at 2 Timothy 3:12, where he says: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted"? Would you endure or would you give up? A Christian man in Italy faced such a challenge. He did not give up, and Jehovah blessed him for it.

The man in question was formerly an avid communist, but he was also an ardent Catholic. He believed in the equality of people and felt that both movements preached this ideal. One of his workmates spoke to him about God's Kingdom, and he at once recognized that this was the only way that equality could be achieved. He took to the truth with the same fervor that he had shown for communism and Catholicism and was baptized in 1972. What about his wife? She bitterly opposed him. She relates:

"It was in 1970 that my husband had his first contact with Jehovah's Witnesses at his place of work. Gradually, as he studied the Bible, I came to realize that it was a new religion and had points that I did not agree with. Persecution began immediately from me and other family members."

She continues: "My husband's parents harassed him, using every means possible to stop him. As my husband advanced in Bible knowledge, he saw the need to rid our home of

idols. I told him if he did that, something grave would happen. He destroyed a religious picture, and I launched a full-scale verbal and physical attack on him and tore up several of his magazines. At my yelling, my parents-in-law rushed in and hurled themselves at him too, but he did not retaliate.

"The disagreements continued until I left him when he opposed our daughter's attending catechism at church. My husband told me that if I did not return home, he would make a formal charge of abandonment. After a week I decided to return.

"In a further attempt to stop him, I went to a spirit medium and asked that a spell be put on him. The medium started to question me, and I explained the situation. Upon learning it, he told me that no kind of spell has any effect on one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

"We thought of consulting the local priest. The priest advised us to go to a lawyer. To my surprise the lawyer encouraged me to attend the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses with my

husband. My father-in-law, who was with me, objected, saying that his family was very devoted to San Rocco, 'The Protector' of our town. However, the lawyer explained that this 'saint,' like all other idols, was false. Then he identified himself as chairman of Catholic Action and told us that he did not participate at all in the religious feasts because, having read the Bible, he knew that they were all false. In conclusion, he said: 'Go with your husband and be at peace. Listen to him, and you too start to study the Bible.'

"With this encouragement, I reflected on the conduct, changes, and perseverance of my husband, and I started attending meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses along with him. Impressed by the love shown there, I studied, enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School, and started in field service. Finally, I symbolized my dedication in 1977 and am happy now to be in the truth, thanks to Jehovah who helped my husband to persevere and unite the whole family in His worship."



The Sheepfolds and the Shepherd

JESUS is in Jerusalem at the time of the Festival of Dedication, or Hanukkah, a festival that celebrates the rededication to Jehovah of the temple. In 168 B.C.E., about 200 years earlier, Antiochus IV Epiphanes had captured Jerusalem and desecrated the temple and its altar. However, three years later Jerusalem was recaptured and the temple was rededicated. Afterward, an annual rededication celebration was held.

This Festival of Dedication takes place on Chislev 25, the Jewish month that corresponds to the last part of November and first part of December on our modern calendar. Thus, only a little over a hundred days remain until the momentous Passover of 33 C.E. Because it is the season of cold weather, the apostle John calls it "wintertime."

Jesus now uses an illustration in which he mentions three sheepfolds and his role as the Fine Shepherd. The first sheepfold he speaks of is identified with the Mosaic Law covenant arrangement. The Law served like a fence that separated the Jews from the corrupting practices of those people not in this special covenant with God. Jesus explains: "Most truly I say to you, He that does not enter into the sheepfold through the door but climbs up some other place, that one is a thief and a plunderer. But he that enters through the door is shepherd of the sheep."

Others had come and claimed to be the Messiah, or Christ, but they were not the true shepherd of whom Jesus goes on to speak: "The doorkeeper opens to this one, and the sheep listen to his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. . . . A stranger they will by no means follow but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."

The "doorkeeper" of the first sheepfold was John the Baptizer. As the doorkeeper, John 'opened to' Jesus by identifying him to those symbolic sheep

that he would lead out to pasture. These sheep that Jesus calls by name and leads out are eventually admitted to another sheepfold, as he explains: "Most truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep," that is, the door of a new sheepfold. When Jesus institutes the new covenant with his disciples and from heaven pours holy spirit upon them the following Pentecost, they are admitted to this new sheepfold.

Further explaining his role, Jesus says: "I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved, and he will go in and out and





find pasturage. . . . I have come that they might have life and might have it in abundance. . . . I am the fine shepherd, and I know my sheep and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I surrender my soul in behalf of the sheep."

Recently, Jesus had comforted his followers, saying: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom." This little flock, which eventually numbers 144,000, comes into this new, or second, sheepfold. But Jesus goes on to observe: "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring,

and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd."

Since the "other sheep" are "not of this fold," they must be of another fold, a third one. These last two folds, or pens of sheep, have different destinies. The "little flock" in one fold will rule with Christ in heaven, and the "other sheep" in the other fold will live on the Paradise earth. Yet, despite being in two folds, the sheep have no jealousy, nor do they feel segregated, for as Jesus says, they "become one flock" under "one shepherd."

The Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, willingly gives his life for both folds of sheep. "I surrender it of my own initiative," he says. "I have authority to surrender it, and I have authority to receive it again. The commandment on this I received from my Father." When Jesus says this, a division results among the Jews.

Many of the crowd say: "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to him?" But others respond: "These are not the sayings of a demonized man." Then, evidently referring back a couple of months to his curing of the man born blind, they add: "A demon cannot open blind people's eyes, can it?" **John 10:1-22; 9:1-7; Luke 12:32; Revelation 14:1, 3; 21:3, 4; Psalm 37:29.**

- ♦ What is the Festival of Dedication, and when is it celebrated?
- ♦ What is the first sheepfold, and who is its doorkeeper?
- ♦ How does the doorkeeper open to the Shepherd, and to what are the sheep thereafter admitted?
- ♦ Who make up the Fine Shepherd's two folds, and how many flocks do they become?

Jehovah Fills My Every Need

As told by John E. (Ted) Sewell

AS WE took each step through that steamy Thailand jungle, I thought, 'There must be easier ways to get from Bangkok to Burma!' Footsore and soaked with perspiration, my main concern was that we would meet up with one of the tigers, black bears, or elephants that were known to roam these jungles—not to mention venomous snakes. Why were Frank Dewar and I making this hazardous journey?

We were both missionaries in Thailand, and we had just learned that a three-day convention was to be held in Rangoon, Burma, November 26-28, 1938. Our meager finances dictated getting from Bangkok to Rangoon by the cheapest means possible, and part of that trip required a 50-mile trek through the jungle.

We set out from Bangkok by train on November 16, transferred to a small bus, were rowed across the Ping River in a large dugout canoe, and then began our long walk through the jungle. Frank had pored over maps and finally settled for a route that seemed feasible. We had no roads to follow—just a narrow path, made by travelers, that basically followed a telephone line.

We were thankful that the only animals we sighted were numerous monkeys in the

trees. The breathtakingly beautiful hanging orchids were an unexpected delight. As afternoon shadows lengthened, we became concerned as to how safe it would be to sleep in the jungle. It was so different from the Australian bushland where I had often slept out in the open at night. We had also been warned about smugglers that were known to rob and even physically harm travelers.

Our hearts sank when we came face to face with a group of fierce-looking men, each with a large machete hanging from his belt. They stopped us and asked where we were going. When we explained that we were on our way to attend a Christian convention in Rangoon,

they looked at us incredulously but moved on without harming us.

Shortly, we met two young men who looked more friendly. With our limited knowledge of the Thai language, we hired them to lead us through to Burma. As darkness fell, we arrived at a large tree with steps up to a wooden platform among the branches. There the four of us slept.

By the evening of the next day, we reached a small village where we were able to stay overnight on the veranda of a primitive house. On the third day, we reached the village of Mae Sot on the Burmese



*A recent picture of me
with my wife, Isabell*

border. Here we said good-bye to our guides and gladly paid them for their good services.

After crossing the river into Burma, we took a small bus over a mountainous road and then boarded a riverboat to Moulmein. The last part of our journey to Rangoon was by train, which seemed so easy after our painful trek on foot. The whole trip had taken a week, but it was worth all the effort to enjoy the spiritual association of our brothers. It was just one more of the many evidences that Jehovah has filled my every need. But let me tell you how I came to be in Thailand.

Realizing Spiritual Needs

Life and customs were changing when I was born in West Australia in 1910. World War I that began in 1914 seemed to speed up the changes. Though only about seven, I clearly remember Mother writing letters to Father who was away at war in Europe. Once Mother said to me: "You know, the Bible says there will be wars and rumors of wars." She did not explain any further, but I was curious.

Years later, in December 1934, while I was returning on horseback to the farm where I worked, I met an old school friend who told me that some of Jehovah's Witnesses had recently come up from Perth. His family bought their books but had decided not to read them. Being curious, I obtained the book *Life* from him.

As I rode along in the clear night air, the moonlight was so bright that I could read the large print of each chapter heading. When I got back to the farm, I continued reading by the light of a kerosene lantern. There, for the first time, I learned that God has a personal name—Jehovah. I was delighted to learn that God has a wonderful purpose for our earth, yes, that the earth will become a paradise for obedient mankind to enjoy. Why, in this book all my questions were being answered!

The first persons I wanted to tell were my parents, who lived on a small farm 86 miles away. This meant a horseback ride for a day and a half. When I told Mother what I had been learning, she surprised me by saying that she too was studying and enjoying the same Bible literature! On the long homeward ride a week later, I had much thinking to do, for my studies had shown me that knowledge and faith are not all that God requires. I now knew that a true Christian must follow Jesus Christ and personally serve Jehovah by preaching to others. So I determined to try to do this each weekend from then on.

Exciting Opportunities Open Up

In order to witness in our scattered farming district, I bought a Model-T Ford that had been converted into a utility truck. Carrying bedding and a few other essentials, I visited farmers all Saturday afternoon, slept in the truck, and then continued witnessing from farm to farm Sunday morning. Late in the afternoon I returned home.

In April 1936 I symbolized my dedication by baptism at a small convention in Perth. One of the talks stressed the full-time pioneer ministry. I knew I had no Scriptural obligations preventing me from sharing in this important work, so in December 1936, I began pioneering.

In that same month, two rugged pioneers, Arthur Willis and Bill Newlands, arrived in Perth by truck. They had left Sydney on the east coast nine months earlier and had made a witnessing tour across Australia. You can imagine my excitement when I was assigned by the Society to join them on their return trip. They gave me invaluable training I have never forgotten.

Across the Nullarbor Plain

The name Nullarbor means "no trees." It is a fitting description of the arid, treeless



Witnessing in the Nullarbor

plain in the middle of Australia. In the mid-1930's the route that we there traversed was some 1,000 miles of the roughest road imaginable.

Each night we slept on cots, usually out under the clear sky. There is little rainfall and virtually no dew in that part of the country. As we settled down each night under the canopy of stars, brilliant in the clear, unpolluted air, I was often reminded of the opening words of the 19th Psalm: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling."

The railway line crossing the Nullarbor is said to be the longest stretch of straight rail track in the world. It runs for 300 miles without the slightest curve or bend. We enjoyed witnessing in the small settlements along the railroad, and to people living on sheep stations, or ranches. Landholdings in that part of Australia were enormous. I recall a station of more than *one million* acres with the homestead about 50 miles from the front gate.

Finally, we arrived in Katoomba in the Blue Mountains just west of Sydney in time for the Memorial on March 26, 1937. Our itinerant assignment had been enjoy-

able and spiritually rewarding, but it was a pleasant change to stay for a time with a congregation of God's people.

To Partake or Not?

At the time of that 1937 Memorial, there was still confusion concerning the "other sheep." (John 10:16) Some felt that the measure of faith and Christian zeal a person displayed would indicate whether he had received the heavenly calling or not. So, like a number of others in similar circumstances, I partook of the emblems. The following year a number of us pioneers were again troubled as to partaking.

Inwardly we were looking forward to life on a paradise earth, yet many felt that our zeal and pioneer ministry gave evidence of our being spirit anointed. Right on time Jehovah gave us the answer through his earthly organization. On the very afternoon of the Memorial, the March 15, 1938, issue of *The Watchtower* arrived. Its main article, "His Flock," was a detailed study of John 10:14-16. How delighted we were with the clear explanation that answered our questions!

The article provided examples of how God's spirit acted mightily upon his servants in ancient times and caused them to do powerful works long before the heavenly calling opened up. Similarly, God puts his spirit upon his dedicated servants on earth today to whom he has given the earthly hope. Thus we were grateful to understand the difference between being begotten by holy spirit and being energized by God's spirit to do his will.

Invitation to "Reach Out"

Other thrilling events of 1938 were the visit of the Watch Tower Society's president, Brother Rutherford, and the conven-

tion at the Sydney Sports Ground. A call went out at the convention for pioneers willing to serve in Burma, Malaya, Siam (now Thailand), and Java (now Indonesia). Hector Oates, Fred Paton, and I were delighted to receive assignments to Burma.

I had never before left the shores of Australia. However, within two months, other pioneers and I were on a ship on our way to our assignments. We landed at Singapore on June 22, 1938, and were met at the wharf by Bill Hunter, who was already pioneering there. How strange and interesting everything seemed as we saw the dress and customs of the local people and heard languages we could not understand.

Brother Hunter handed me a telegram from Australia that changed my assignment from Burma to Malaya. Fred Paton and Hector Oates were to continue on to Burma without me. I was glad to learn I would be working with two experienced missionaries, Kurt Gruber and Willi Unglaube. They were originally from Germany but had been serving in Malaya for some time.

After three months in Malaya, I was assigned to Thailand. Willi Unglaube was to accompany me, along with Frank Dewar, who had previously done missionary work there. We arrived by train in September 1938, found ourselves a place to stay temporarily, and got started in the witness work. We found the Thai people kind and patient as we grappled with their expressive language.

Stimulating Rangoon Convention

It was from Bangkok, Thailand, that we made the grueling trip to Rangoon, Burma, described earlier. That was the first time a convention had been held in Burma, and the beautiful City Hall was filled to capacity with over a thousand people for the public lecture. Doors had to be closed as

there was no room for more. There were only a few Witnesses in Burma and neighboring countries, so most of those who came to hear the lecture were people who had responded to the thousands of handbill invitations distributed before the convention.

For us who had come from isolated missionary assignments, it was truly a spiritual tonic. But with the convention over, we returned home to Thailand—this time, however, by an easier route that did not require walking through the jungle.

War and Japanese Invasion

The storm clouds of war were now moving ominously toward southeast Asia. As the Japanese military forces moved into Thailand, a ban was placed on the work of Jehovah's Witnesses. All British, American, and Dutch people were interned in a camp for the duration of the war. George Powell, a pioneer who had moved up from Singapore to join us in Bangkok, was imprisoned with me. We spent three years and eight months in the camp together.

During the time we were confined, we were unable to receive any new literature or word from the Society. But we experienced the promise of the psalmist: "Jehovah is giving support to all who are falling, and is raising up all who are bowed down." —Psalm 145:14.

Back to Australia

When the war ended in 1945, I returned to Australia. With good food and more agreeable living conditions, I recovered my good health and was able to start pioneering again. Then, in 1952, I was assigned to the traveling work as a circuit overseer, and I enjoyed this privilege for the next 22 years. In 1957, I married Isabell, who had been a pioneer for 11 years, and we continued in the circuit work as husband and wife.

Health problems began to make constant

traveling difficult, so in 1974 we settled down to pioneer in Melbourne. I still serve as a substitute circuit overseer from time to time, and recently I had the privilege of sharing as an instructor at one of the pioneer service schools. In all this work, my wife has been a constant and joyful support. Now at 78 years of age, I feel deeply grateful to Jehovah as he continues to fill every need.

'A Sounding Brass or a Clashing Cymbal'

Who wants to be just a big noise? "If I . . . do not have love," says the apostle Paul, "I have become a sounding piece of brass or a clashing cymbal." (1 Corinthians 13:1) Paul had just emphasized the need for using special gifts received through God's spirit for the benefit of the whole Christian congregation. If love was lacking, pride and arrogance could cause a Christian to be like a loud, jarring, deafening noise that repelled rather than attracted others.—See 1 Corinthians 12:4-9, 19-26.

We easily understand the idea of a cymbal clashing near us, but what about Paul's other illustration, "a sounding piece of brass"? (Greek, *khal-kos' e-khon'*) Some have rendered this "noisy gong" (*Today's English Version*) and "resounding gong" (*New International Version*). William Harris, writing in the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, points out that *e-khon'* comes from the same root as the English word "echo," hence the idea of echoing or resounding. However, he also says: "The noun *chalkos* is used to describe a wide variety of objects cast from

Looking back over the years, I often reflect on how Jehovah has trained us, helped us over mistakes, and disciplined us to refine us as his servants. I recall the instances when God has provided the means for me to come through trials that were beyond human ability to endure. These memories are a source of strength and a constant reminder that Jehovah has indeed filled every need.

the copper-tin alloy called bronze or brass—armor, knives, cauldrons, mirrors, money, even tablets. But there is no proof of the word being used for a musical instrument." What suggestion, then, does he have?

He refers to a book by Vitruvius, an architect who lived in the first century B.C.E. Vitruvius wrote about the problem of projecting voices in theaters constructed of material like marble and said that special echoing devices called *ekhei'a* were used. These were sounding vases made from bronze that were arranged at the back of an amphitheater to help to amplify and project the sound. Some of these were brought to Rome from a sacked theater in Corinth about one hundred years before Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthian congregation.

Plato, we are told, spoke of a bronze vase as echoing on and on, as did certain empty-headed speakers. This agrees with Shakespeare's expression that "the empty vessel makes the greatest sound." Paul could have had a similar idea in mind when he spoke of those who made much of their special gifts but who lacked the greatest gift of all—love. They echoed loudly but had no real substance. They were like a harsh, discordant noise rather than an attractive, appealing sound. How about you? Are your actions and speech motivated by love, or are you 'a sounding brass or a clashing cymbal'?

Is your home a place of rest and peace?

"May Jehovah make a gift to you, and do you find a resting-place each one in the house of her husband."—RUTH 1:9.



SOME 3,000 years ago, three women embarked on a perilous journey. It would take them into regions generally infested with thieves and desperate men. The women were making their way through the rugged land of Moab. The eldest was the widow Naomi, bent on reaching Bethlehem in her beloved homeland, Judah. At her side were two younger widows, Orpah and Ruth, Moabitesses who had been the wives of Naomi's deceased sons Chilion and Mahlon. Listen!

² "Go," said Naomi, "return, each one to the house of her mother. May Jehovah exercise loving-kindness toward you, just as you have exercised it toward the men now dead and toward me." And for what did Naomi express a further wish? "May Jehovah make a gift to you," she said, "and do you find a resting-place each one in the house of her husband." (Ruth 1:8, 9) Yes, Naomi urged her daughters-in-law to return to their people, hoping that among them God would grant each young woman the rest and comfort that result from having a good husband and home.

³ Orpah departed, but not loyal Ruth. Refusing to forsake her mother-in-law, Ruth resolved: "Your people will be my people, and your God my God." The ultimate result? Why, Ruth found a home of

rest and peace with Boaz and was granted "a perfect wage"! She became an ancestress of King David and of his inimitable Lord, Jesus Christ.—Ruth 1:16; 2:12; 4:13-22; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 1:1-6.

⁴ Naomi desired that Jehovah give each of her daughters-in-law the gift of a secure marriage and a home of rest and peace. Surely, God wants the homelife of his servants to be tranquil. If you are a witness of Jehovah, then, is your home a place of rest and peace?

Choosing the Right Mate

⁵ If you are an unmarried Christian contemplating wedlock, you undoubtedly hope for a tranquil homelife. The first step in that direction is made clear by the apostle Paul, who wrote: "A wife is bound during all the time her husband is alive. But if her husband should fall asleep in

1. Some 3,000 years ago, what three women embarked on a journey to Judah?

2. Naomi had what wish for Orpah and Ruth?

3. What position did Ruth take, and with what ultimate result?

4. What thought-provoking question is raised?

5. If you are an unmarried Christian contemplating wedlock, what is the first step toward a tranquil homelife?

death, she is free to be married to whom she wants, only in the Lord.”—1 Corinthians 7:39.

⁶ To ‘marry only in the Lord’ means to enter wedlock only with a fellow believer. But a Christian should not rush into marriage, even to a person dedicated to Jehovah. Does the individual really ‘seek righteousness and meekness’? (Zephaniah 2:3) Is he or she serving God wholeheartedly? Does the person speak from a heart filled with loving expressions of praise to Jehovah? Is the field ministry a regular and principal part of the individual’s life? Does he or she have the needed qualifications for the ministry and for Christian marriage? Yes, even a baptized mate should be chosen wisely, prayerfully. As far as it is possible, be sure that the believer has fine spiritual qualities. Such a union prevents the peace-disturbing stress and heartache that so often exist in religiously divided households.

⁷ Emotional needs can be met and spiritual things can be shared in the marriage of two dedicated Christians. This results in the closest possible human bond. Christian men and women surely desire a close bond with their marriage mates. Humans were created with an urge to worship, and our greatest happiness results when we take proper steps to satisfy our spiritual need. (Matthew 5:3) Realizing this, surely we would not want to disobey Jehovah by marrying an unbeliever and thus robbing ourselves of this spiritual unity that enhances marriage. (Deuteronomy 7:3, 4) Yes, for the greatest happiness in wedlock, make sure that God is in your marriage. Such a figurative “threefold cord

cannot quickly be torn in two.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12) Indeed, having Jehovah God in your marriage will make it strong and will help to make your home a place of rest and peace.

Counsel That Promotes Domestic Peace

⁸ Among Christians already married, what is needed for a home of rest and peace? Many things, of course, but especially noteworthy is Paul’s counsel at Ephesians 5:21-33. True, a husband or a wife could try to use those words to highlight the shortcomings of his or her mate. But how much better it is to concentrate on counsel that is found there for you to apply personally!

⁹ If you are a Christian husband, personally applying Paul’s counsel will help to make your home a place of rest and peace. The apostle urges: “Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it.” Paul also said: “Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it, as the Christ also does the congregation . . . Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself.” A husband should ‘love his wife as he does himself’—as if she were himself. How appropriate, since ‘the two have become one flesh’!—Genesis 2:24.

¹⁰ A husband who loves his wife as he does himself will take the lead in spiritual matters. He bears responsibility for the situation existing in his family and cannot

6. (a) To ‘marry only in the Lord’ means what? (b) What questions merit consideration by someone seeking a marriage mate? (c) Why should one choose a baptized mate prayerfully?

7. For the greatest happiness in marriage, what is needed?

8. For married Christians, what counsel is especially noteworthy?

9. What counsel did Paul provide for Christian husbands?

10. In view of 1 Timothy 5:8, what responsibility does a Christian husband have?



Christian husbands and wives need to act in ways that promote love and respect

rightly let things slide along, as it were. No, he must care well for the material and spiritual interests of the entire household. "Certainly," said Paul, "if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith." —1 Timothy 5:8.

¹¹ A Christian wife can do much to make the home a place of rest and peace. For wives, Paul offers this inspired counsel: "Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation, he being a savior of this body. In fact, as the congregation is in subjection to the Christ, so let wives also be to their husbands in everything. . . . The wife should have deep respect for her husband." (Ephesians 5: 22-24, 33) This "deep respect" contributes toward making the home a place of rest and peace. Surely, it differs greatly from

11. What counsel does Paul provide for Christian wives?

the attitude of so many worldly wives who have an independent, challenging spirit that disturbs and upsets a home.

¹² Christian husbands and wives need to act in ways that promote love and respect. The husband should be considerate, loving, spiritually mature. And the wife should be God-fearing, cooperative, lovable. It is not difficult to see how such attitudes would make a home a place of rest and peace.

Never "Allow Place for the Devil"

¹³ Since humans are imperfect, it may not be easy to maintain a peaceful home. For instance, external pressures may result in stress that could rob the home of peace. But applying Paul's counsel at Ephesians 4:26, 27 can contribute to the tranquillity of our homes. Paul wrote: "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state, neither allow place for the Devil." Even if a husband or a wife justifiably becomes angry on occasion, neither of them should ever let this angry state become a sin by remaining in a provoked state and harboring animosity. May we never let the peace disturber, Satan the Devil, rob our Christian homes of peace!—1 Peter 5:8.

¹⁴ For domestic peace, of course, each marriage mate must apply Bible counsel. If a problem causes some disruption, praying together for God's spirit can result in the displaying of its fruitage and the restoration of domestic peace. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22, 23) Yes, even under the most trying circumstances, this course will help to make the home a place of rest and peace.

12. How should Christian husbands and wives act?

13. What counsel does Paul give at Ephesians 4: 26, 27?

14. If a problem has caused some disruption, what is suggested to restore domestic peace?

Role of Children in Family Peace

¹⁵ Younger ones, too, can help to promote family peace. How? By manifesting an obedient and cooperative spirit. Such a spirit depends largely on the Scriptural teaching they receive and the way a Christian parent fulfills his individual role as a teacher. Part of this vital training is setting the right example as parents. As Proverbs 22:6 aptly puts matters: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it." With good training and fine parental example, children usually will not turn aside from the proper way. But, of course, much depends on the quality and extent of the training, as well as on the heart of the young one.

¹⁶ Begin training your children spiritually while they are very young. That was

15. How can younger ones help to promote family peace?

16. What example as to child training do we have in Timothy's case?

Timothy was taught God's truths from infancy. Are you helping your children to grow in knowledge and love for Jehovah?



done in the case of Timothy, for Paul urged him: "Continue in the things that you learned and were persuaded to believe, knowing from what persons you learned them and that from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:14, 15) Yes, Timothy was "persuaded to believe" Scriptural truths. Used here is a Greek word meaning "to be firmly persuaded of; to be assured of" something. (*New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, page 514) That 'firm persuasion' called for intense effort on the part of Timothy's Christian mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois. They succeeded in imparting to Timothy 'faith without hypocrisy,' even though his father apparently was an unbeliever. (2 Timothy 1:5) Are you working to develop similar faith in your children?

¹⁷ Timothy was taught the Scriptures from infancy. Therefore, never underestimate a child's learning capacity. *The New York Times* reported that according to one study, "there are twice as many synaptic connections—sites where the treelike branches of brain cells meet up—in certain regions of children's brains than in those of adults." Even very young children can learn something about what is good and what is bad, pleasant or painful. In his book *The Brain*, Richard M. Restak, M.D., says: "In all living organisms, memories may be stored within the brain according to their importance for survival. An animal 'remembers' its predator and withdraws at the first sign of its enemy's approach. Memories are also laid down in tandem with the intensity of emotional experiences. As children, we don't have to be told more than once not to put our hands on a hot stove." Of course, much is

17. What evidence is there that a person can be taught from infancy?

yet to be learned about functions of the brain, but a child can learn by experience. For instance, even at a very early age, a youngster can be taught to sit quietly at Christian meetings.

¹⁸ As children get older, they can progressively take in spiritual instruction. Among other things, they can learn that God expects them to obey their parents. This requires firm but loving parental training, for Paul wrote: "Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous: 'Honor your father and your mother'; which is the first command with a promise: 'That it may go well with you and you may endure a long time on the earth.' And you, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:1-4) Obedient children contribute greatly toward making the home a place of rest and peace.

¹⁹ But what can strengthen the parent-child bond? Reading the Bible and Christian literature together surely can help to do this. Such publications as *My Book of Bible Stories* and *Listening to the Great Teacher* are especially useful in helping young ones. When reading the Bible and at other times, emphasize love for God. While eating a meal, make statements that praise Jehovah as the Great Provider. When traveling with your children, ascribe to God the marvels of creation—plants, flowers, trees, mountains, streams, lakes, and animal life. While engaging in the field ministry, seize opportunities to comment on God's love. Daily, help your child to grow in love for Jehovah as a person. Of course, to reach your child's heart, such love must be in your own heart.—Deuteronomy 6:4-7.

18. At Ephesians 6:1-4, what counsel did Paul give children and parents?

19. What can strengthen the parent-child bond?

²⁰ Never forget that discipline is essential. When properly administered and received, "it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness." (Hebrews 12:11) And children who wisely submit to parental discipline bring the family joy and honor and uphold its good name. (Proverbs 10:1; 13:1; 23:24, 25) Indeed, by filling their Scriptural roles, parents and children make their home a place of rest and peace.

Maintain a Home of Rest and Peace

²¹ How can a home be maintained as a place of rest and peace? Says a proverb: "By wisdom a household will be built up, and by discernment it will prove firmly established. And by knowledge will the interior rooms be filled with all precious and pleasant things of value." (Proverbs 24:3, 4) By the knowledge and work of an industrious family, a home may come to be filled with fine things of a material sort. But a household can be built up and established on a firm foundation only if its members show discernment and exercise

20. How important is proper discipline?

21. According to Proverbs 24:3, 4, how can a home be maintained as a place of rest and peace?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ For a tranquil homelife, what choice should be made by an unmarried Christian contemplating wedlock?
- ☐ According to Ephesians 5:21-33, what must husbands and wives do to achieve domestic peace?
- ☐ How can applying the counsel at Ephesians 4:26, 27 help to make the home a place of peace?
- ☐ In what way can younger ones contribute to family peace?
- ☐ How can we maintain our homes as places of rest and peace?

godly wisdom, applying Scriptural knowledge aright. Yes, wisdom builds up a family and makes possible its successful life as a unit.

²² Applying God's instructions within a household will result in peace, for the Israelites were told: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk. O if

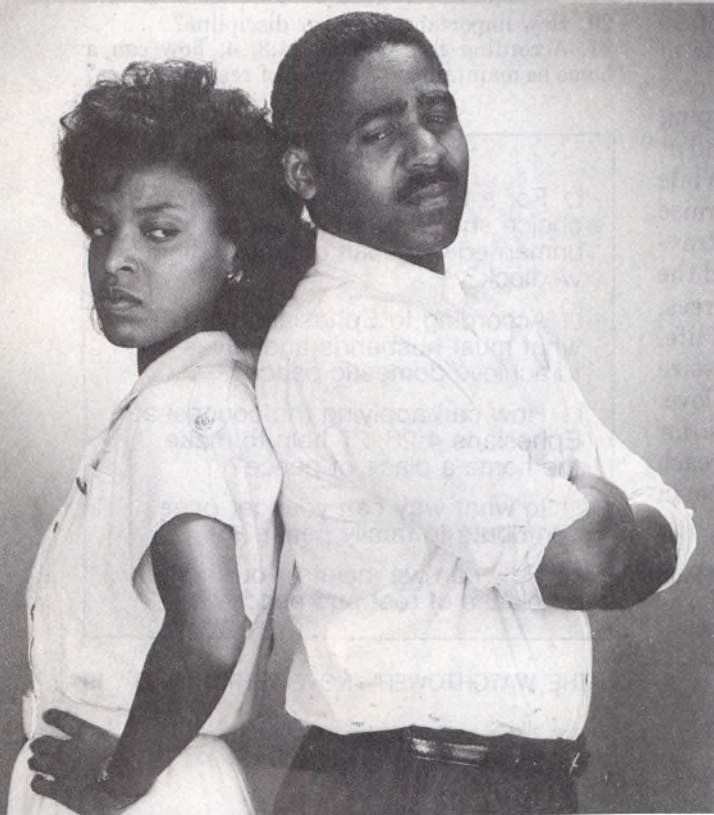
22. Applying God's instructions will result in what?

only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea." (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Therefore, may all godly husbands, wives, and children apply heavenly wisdom. Then our homes will always be places of rest and peace.

When marital peace is threatened

"A wife should not depart from her husband; . . . and a husband should not leave his wife."

—1 CORINTHIANS 7:10, 11.



JEHOVAH GOD united the first human pair in wedlock and purposed that this one-flesh bond should last. It was to be a blessed union that would result in their happiness and in the producing of righteous offspring, all to God's glory.—Genesis 1:27, 28; 2:24.

² That ideal marital arrangement was disrupted by independent thinking and sin. (Genesis 3:1-19; Romans 5:12) In fact, a spirit of independence is one of the factors that leads to the severing of marital ties today. Thus, in the United States during 1985, there were 5 divorces—compared with 10.2 marriages—per 1,000 people. In 1986 a report from Moscow indicated that only 37 percent of the marriages in the Soviet Union last three years and that 70 percent end within a decade.

1. What was Jehovah's purpose regarding marriage?

2. What is one factor that leads to the severing of marital ties?

³ A spirit of independence can cause marital strife. It also inhibits spiritual development, for "the fruit of righteousness has its seed sown under peaceful conditions." (James 3:18) But who is the main peace-wrecker? Satan. And how sad it is when any of God's servants "allow place for the Devil" and thus fail to enjoy homes of rest and peace!—Ephesians 4:26, 27.

⁴ When Christian mates view separation as the only solution to their marital problems, they are in danger of succumbing to Satan's devices, and there is something seriously wrong spiritually. (2 Corinthians 2:11) God's principles are not being applied fully by one or both of them. (Proverbs 3:1-6) So they should promptly make prayerful efforts to resolve their differences. If these seem irreconcilable, congregation elders can be consulted. (Matthew 18:15-17) Although these men are not authorized to tell fellow believers exactly what to do about their marital problems, they can direct attention to what the Scriptures say.—Galatians 6:5.

⁵ If the marital situation is so bad that the Christian couple is even considering divorce, the elders can point out that divorce and remarriage are Scripturally acceptable only if one's mate has committed "fornication." This term covers adultery and other forms of immoral sexual relations and perversions. (Matthew 19:9; Romans 7:2, 3; see *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1983, page 31.) Yet, what if "fornication" has not been committed but marital peace is seriously threatened?

3. (a) What can cause marital strife? (b) In regard to marriage, who is the main peace-wrecker?

4. When Christian mates have severe marital problems, what should they realize and what should they do?

5. On what basis is divorce with the possibility of remarriage to someone else Scripturally acceptable?

What do the Scriptures say about legal or de facto separation?

Paul's Inspired Counsel

⁶ In an effort to help a Christian couple whose marriage ties are threatened, the elders can direct attention to the apostle Paul's words: "To the married people I give instructions, yet not I but the Lord, that a wife should not depart from her husband; but if she should actually depart, let her remain unmarried or else make up again with her husband; and a husband should not leave his wife." (1 Corinthians 7:10, 11) Christian mates should be able to settle their problems, making allowances for human imperfection. No problem should be so great that it cannot be resolved by praying earnestly, applying Bible principles, and showing the love that is a fruit of God's spirit.—Galatians 5:22; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

⁷ But what if Christian mates do separate? They must "remain unmarried or else make up again." Unless it is a question of divorce obtained on the grounds of "fornication," neither of them is Scripturally free to remarry. In view of this and the "prevalence of fornication," it would be good for them to "make up again" without delay. (1 Corinthians 7:1, 2) It is not the business of the elders to demand that the man and the woman end their separation, but they may not qualify for certain service privileges because of their marital problems. For instance, if a man "does not know how to preside over his own household," he evidently lacks the ability to "take care of God's congregation" as an overseer.—1 Timothy 3:1-5, 12.

6. (a) What is the essence of Paul's counsel at 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11? (b) How should Christian mates resolve marital problems?

7. (a) If Christian mates do separate, what is their Scriptural position? (b) The separation of two married Christians might have what bearing on service privileges?

⁸ Stress is laid on preserving a marriage even if only one mate is a believer. Paul wrote: "If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and yet she is agreeable to dwelling with him, let him not leave her; and a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and yet he is agreeable to dwelling with her, let her not leave her husband. . . . But if the unbelieving one proceeds to depart, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace. For, wife, how do you know but that you will save your husband? Or, husband, how do you know but that you will save your wife?" (1 Corinthians 7:12-16) If the unbeliever chooses to depart, the Christian will let him go. But the believer, hoping that the unbeliever may be won over to Christianity, will not initiate the breakup. Timothy's mother, Eunice, apparently stayed with her unbelieving husband but imparted spiritual instruction to her son.—2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15.

Grounds for Separation

⁹ Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 encourage marriage mates to stay together. Yet, some, after trying very hard to preserve their marriage relationship, have finally decided that, in all conscience, they have no choice but to separate. What may be the grounds for such a step?

¹⁰ *Willful nonsupport* is one basis for separation. When entering wedlock, a husband assumes the responsibility of providing for his wife and any children they may have. The man who does not provide for members of his household "has

disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith." (1 Timothy 5:8) So separation is possible if there is willful nonsupport. Of course, appointed elders should give careful consideration to an accusation that a Christian is refusing to support his wife and family. Stubborn refusal to support one's family may result in disfellowshipping.

¹¹ *Extreme physical abuse* is another basis for separation. Suppose an unbelieving mate often gets drunk, becomes enraged, and causes the believer physical harm. (Proverbs 23:29-35) Through prayer and by displaying the fruitage of Jehovah's spirit, the believer may be able to prevent such outbursts and make the situation endurable. But if the point is reached where the health and life of the abused mate actually are in jeopardy, separation would be allowable Scripturally. Again, congregation elders should look into charges of physical abuse when two Christians are involved in the troubled marriage, and disfellowshipping action may have to be taken.—Compare Galatians 5:19-21; Titus 1:7.

¹² *Absolute endangerment of spirituality* also provides a basis for separation. The believer in a religiously divided home should do everything possible to take advantage of God's spiritual provisions. But separation is allowable if an unbelieving mate's opposition (perhaps including physical restraint) makes it genuinely impossible to pursue true worship and actually imperils the believer's spirituality. Yet, what if a very unhealthy spiritual state exists where both mates are believers? The elders should render assistance,

11. What is another basis for separation, but what might make the situation endurable?

12. (a) How might the believer's spirituality have a bearing on the question of separation? (b) What is suggested if a very unhealthy spiritual state exists in a Christian home?

8. What is the substance of Paul's counsel at 1 Corinthians 7:12-16?
9, 10. (a) In view of 1 Timothy 5:8, what is one basis for separation of marriage mates? (b) What should appointed elders do if a Christian man is accused of refusing to support his wife and children?



Christian mates whose marital peace is threatened should discuss their problems in a manner befitting those serving Jehovah

but especially should the baptized husband work diligently to remedy the situation. Of course, if a baptized marriage partner acts like an apostate and tries to prevent his mate from serving Jehovah, the elders should handle matters according to the Scriptures. If disfellowshipping takes place in a case involving absolute endangerment of spirituality, willful nonsupport, or extreme physical abuse, the faithful Christian who seeks a legal separation would not be going against Paul's counsel about taking a believer to court.—1 Corinthians 6:1-8.

¹³ If circumstances are extreme, then, separation may be warranted. But flimsy pretexts obviously should not be used to obtain a separation. Any Christians who

13. Under what circumstances may separation of marriage mates be warranted?

do separate must bear personal responsibility for that action and should realize that all of us will render an account to Jehovah.—Hebrews 4:13.

A Wise Step?

¹⁴ Prayerful thought should be given to problems that separation is likely to create. For instance, a one-parent family seldom provides what two-parent families can in balance and discipline. And separation may have an impact on children similar to that of divorce, regarding which the journal *India Today* reported: "Sheena, with large eyes that seem to take

in the whole world, is six. Her parents divorced two years ago after an ugly court battle. Soon after, her father married another woman. For a year she got bad attacks of asthma and constantly sucks her thumb. She lives with her mother in South Delhi. The mother: 'My sadness has travelled to Sheena. . . . She misses her father. . . . She is more mature than most children her age. But she has these uncontrollable bouts of crying, as if she wants to take out something from within her. School was a problem. Children can be so cruel. Often, she retreats into a world of make-believe: she makes up a story about all of us going out together for her friends.'"

14. (a) What problem is separation likely to create? (b) How may separation affect children?

¹⁵ Often, separation does not work out well for a Christian husband and wife either. They soon learn that without a mate or the children there is a gnawing void. Not to be ignored are the pressures resulting from separation. Will it be possible to care for matters from a financial standpoint or otherwise? And what if the strain of separation results in a fall into immorality? Jesus said: "Wisdom is proved righteous by its works." (Matthew 11:19) Especially when both mates are Christians, what is worked out through separation has sometimes proved to be very unwise.

Work to Resolve Problems

¹⁶ Christian mates who find their marital peace seriously threatened should discuss their differences in a manner befitting those who serve God. And they surely ought to make allowances for imperfection. (Philippians 2:1-4) But what else can be done?

¹⁷ Displaying wisdom in connection with material things can contribute to marital peace. To illustrate: After considering his wife's negative viewpoint, a man may decide, nevertheless, that it is wise for his family to move elsewhere. This may seem advisable for economic reasons, but it may also enable the family to advance Kingdom interests by serving where the need is greater. (Matthew 6:33) His Christian wife may not favor the move because she would be leaving behind her parents or familiar surroundings. But she will be wise to cooperate fully with her husband, who is the head of the household and has

the responsibility of determining where his family will live. Moreover, her submissiveness and loving cooperation will contribute to domestic peace.—Ephesians 5: 21-24.

¹⁸ Family peace flourishes and problems seem less serious when marriage partners do things together. For example, Christian mates have splendid opportunities to work with each other in the field ministry. If they do this regularly and take their children with them, the entire family will benefit. There may also be various opportunities to strengthen the marriage bond by sharing in other wholesome activities especially enjoyed by one mate or the other.

¹⁹ Properly exercised headship will strengthen marital ties. Of course, the mature Christian husband will not be a dictator. Rather, 'he will keep on loving his wife and will not be bitterly angry with her.' Jehovah expects him to exercise loving headship. (Colossians 3:18, 19) In turn, such headship promotes family peace.

In Divided Households

²⁰ Being reasonable aids in resolving marital problems between Christian mates. (Philippians 4:5) But reasonableness is also important if peace is threatened in a religiously divided household. If an unbelieving husband tries to prevent his Christian wife from serving Jehovah, she may endeavor to reason with him, tactfully pointing out that she accords him religious freedom and she should logically receive similar treatment. (Matthew 7:12) Though she is to be in relative sub-

18. What opportunities do Christian mates have to do things together?

19. Headship of what kind will promote family peace?

20, 21. How may reasonableness prove beneficial when peace is threatened in a religiously divided household?

15. What effect may separation have on a Christian husband or wife?

16. Christian mates who find their marital peace threatened should do what?

17. How can displaying wisdom in connection with material things contribute to marital peace?

jection to her unbelieving husband, God's will must be done where there is a conflict. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Acts 5:29) Surely, *attending* Christian meetings three times a week is not excessive. But the believing wife may find it wise to be at home on other evenings and to schedule much of her field ministry during hours when her husband is working and the children are in school. With reasonableness and good planning, she need not "give up in doing what is fine."—Galatians 6:9.

²¹ Reasonableness extends to other matters too. For example, a person has a right to practice a certain religion. But it would be reasonable and wise for a Christian wife not to place her Bibles and Bible study aids where a strongly opposed husband might object. Conflict may be avoided if such publications are kept among her personal effects and she studies them privately. Of course, she must not compromise on righteous principles.—Matthew 10:16.

²² If disruption of domestic peace centers on religious instruction of the children, the believing wife can tactfully arrange to have them accompany her to meetings and in the field ministry. But if the unbelieving husband and father prevents this, she can teach the children Bible principles so that when they grow up and leave home, they are likely to pursue true worship. If the husband is the believer, as the head of the household, he has the Scriptural obligation to raise his children as Christians. So he should study the Bible with them, take them to meetings, and teach them in the field ministry. (Ephesians 6:4) Naturally, he should be kind, loving, and reasonable in dealing with his unbelieving wife.

22. What might be done if disruption of domestic peace centers on the religious instruction of the children?

Maintain Peace as a United Family

²³ Since marriage partners are "one flesh," they should live together in peace according to God's arrangement for married people, especially if both mates are Christians. (Matthew 19:5; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5) But if marital peace is threatened in your case, prayerfully review the foregoing Scriptural points. It may also be helpful to think back to the time of your courtship. How hard both of you tried to do what was right and lay the basis for a happy union! Will you now make similar efforts to hold your marriage together?

²⁴ Christians united in wedlock have a wonderful gift from God—their marriage! If you live up to your marital vows and maintain integrity to Jehovah, before you is the righteous new world in which heart-rending separation and divorce no longer will plague mankind. So show gratitude for wedlock as a figurative "threefold cord," with Jehovah as a vital part of it. (Ecclesiastes 4:12) And may all members of your united household enjoy the blessing of family happiness in a home of rest and peace.

23. If marital peace is threatened, what may prove helpful?

24. What attitude should Christians have toward wedlock?

What Are Your Answers?

- ☐ How would you epitomize Paul's counsel at 1 Corinthians 7:10-16?
- ☐ What are valid reasons for the separation of marriage mates?
- ☐ How may Christians resolve problems when marital peace is threatened?
- ☐ In religiously divided households, how can reasonableness contribute to peace?

Has God called you to peace?

"If the unbelieving one proceeds to depart, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace."

—1 CORINTHIANS 7:15.

JEHOVAH never purposed that wedlock should lead to heartrending separation or divorce. Marriage was to be a lasting 'one-flesh' bond, resulting in joy, rest, and peace. (Genesis 2:24; Ruth 1:9) In general, the Scriptures counsel married people to remain together, even if one mate is a Christian and the other an unbeliever. (1 Corinthians 7:12-16) Moreover, treacherous dealings that result in severing matrimonial ties make one morally accountable to God, who 'hates a divorcing.'—Malachi 2:13-16.

² Human imperfection and other factors have sometimes led to separation or divorce even among baptized servants of God. Because of the high regard Christians have for wedlock, however, usually these steps are taken only after persistent efforts to hold marriages together. In this regard, God himself set the supreme example. As the "husbandly owner" of ancient Israel, he endured centuries of stubbornness, rebellion, and spiritual adultery on the part of his people. (Isaiah 54:1-5; Jeremiah 3:14-17; Hosea 1:10, 11; 3:1-5) Only after they went beyond the point of reclamation did Jehovah cast them off as a nation.—Matthew 23:37, 38.

³ At times, congregation elders are approached by fellow believers desiring help with serious marital problems. The elders are not authorized to tell anyone to leave or divorce a marriage mate, but they can point to what God's Word says about these matters.

1. Scripturally, how should marriage be viewed?
2. How do Christians view separation and divorce?
3. (a) For what Scripturally permissible reasons might a Christian separate from a marriage mate? (b) Scriptural divorce is possible under what circumstances?



As shown in the preceding article, separation is Biblically permissible in a case of willful nonsupport, extreme physical abuse, or the absolute endangerment of spirituality. It has also been noted that Scriptural divorce with the possibility of future remarriage to another partner is possible if a mate has committed "fornication," which embraces several forms of immoral sexual relations. (Matthew 19:9) Naturally, separation or divorce should not be a foregone conclusion, since it may be possible to restore marital peace, and even adultery or other forms of fornication can be forgiven by an innocent marriage partner.—Matthew 5:31, 32; compare Hosea 3:1-3.

⁴ As we noted in the previous article, the apostle Paul urged married Christians not to leave their mates. (1 Corinthians 7:10-16) In view of Paul's words, if an unbelieving mate chooses to remain with his Christian marriage partner, the believer should try to help him spiritually. (1 Peter 3:

4. (a) Briefly summarize what Paul told married Christians at 1 Corinthians 7:10-16. (b) When can it be said: "God has called you to peace"?

1-4) His conversion would do much to make the home a place of rest and peace. Yet, if the unbeliever objects to the faith of his believing mate so strongly that he chooses to separate, what can the Christian do? If the believer tried to force him or her to stay, the unbeliever might make the situation so disagreeable that the Christian would be totally robbed of peace. So in the interests of peace, the believer can let the unbeliever depart. (Matthew 5:9) Only when an *unbelieving* marriage partner leaves can it be said: "God has called you to peace." These words cannot rightly be used to justify separation of two Christian mates on unscriptural or frivolous grounds.

⁵ Every separation or divorce has its individual factors, and no "formula" covers every case. But what problems may a separated or divorced Christian face? What can be done about them? And how can others be of help?

Emotional or Sexual Needs

⁶ Scripturally allowable separation or divorce will solve some problems. But such steps basically result in trading one set of problems for another. For instance, one divorced Christian said: "I can't help thanking Jehovah that now I have peace." But she admitted: "It's not easy raising children as one parent. And sometimes one can get very lonely and depressed. Even sexually it's not easy. One has to adjust to a whole different life."^{*}

⁷ If a Christian has a choice, therefore, he should think carefully about the possible consequences of separation or divorce. For

^{*} For a discussion of one-parent families, please see *The Watchtower* of September 15, 1980, pages 15-26.

5. What questions now merit our consideration?
6. As regards problems, what can be said about separation or divorce?
7. Why should a Christian think carefully about the consequences of separation or divorce?

example, consider emotional needs, perhaps a woman's desire for male companionship. (Compare Genesis 3:16.) A divorced woman may have strong hopes of remarriage. Some desire release from a trying marriage, but are they ready to accept the possibility that there may not be an opportunity for remarriage?

⁸ Paul wrote: "If she should actually depart, let her remain unmarried or else make up again with her husband." (1 Corinthians 7:11) With some effort, it may be possible for a woman to 'make up with' her husband or 'be reconciled to' him. If Christian mates have separated, then, they should give reconciliation very serious, prayerful thought. Moreover, they should not ignore the fact that sexual impulses may pose a danger. How is God likely to view them if their failure to become reconciled should result in a fall into immorality? Illustrating this danger is the experience of a certain baptized woman. After a divorce, she began dating a worldly man, soon became pregnant, and was disfellowshipped. Although she was later reinstated, her experience emphasizes the need for caution and prayerful reliance on Jehovah so as to avoid 'sinning against God.' (Genesis 39:7-12) It is also obvious that emotional and sexual needs should not be minimized when separation or divorce is initially considered.

Loneliness Can Be Lessened

⁹ If separation or divorce is unavoidable, the resulting problems will have to be faced. For instance, loneliness is a serious problem for some separated or divorced Christians. What can others do about this? Well, congregation elders and others can show

8. (a) In view of 1 Corinthians 7:11, to what should separated Christian mates give prayerful thought? (b) What needs should not be minimized when considering separation or divorce?
9. How might we help separated or divorced Christians to combat loneliness?

spiritual interest in such individuals, seeking to encourage them. (Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:14.) Among other things, we might occasionally invite these persons and their children to our home for a modest meal and upbuilding conversation with our family. It is not necessary to spread a banquet, for "better is a dish of vegetables where there is love than a manger-fed bull and hatred along with it." (Proverbs 15:17) The evening might include the relating of experiences enjoyed in the ministry or a group study in preparation for a Christian meeting.

¹⁰ Having the divorced or separated parent and his or her children join your family in the field ministry can also help them to cope with loneliness. Of course, others cannot take the place of the missing parent, but one divorced Christian woman said: "The difficulties of raising my children without a man in the house have been minimized considerably by the assistance of elders and servants in the congregation who have tried to compensate in practical ways."

¹¹ Yet, there is reason for caution. One sister admitted: "Since my son is fatherless, a brother very kindly took an interest in him. . . . I began to see how kind and generous he was to my son, and wrong desires began to develop within me. It was just like David developing a wrong desire for something that was not his." (2 Samuel 11:1-4) Although sexual immorality did not occur, this woman became ashamed of her thoughts and flirtatious actions, sought Jehovah's forgiveness, and broke off association with the brother. How well this illustrates the need to reject wrong desires and "avoid any semblance of evil"—1 Thessalonians 5:22, *The New American Bible*; Galatians 5:24.

10, 11. (a) In what other way might a separated or divorced Christian be helped? (b) What reason is there for caution?

¹² Loneliness may be lessened by doing things for others. "If you are busy reaching out and helping others, there is no room for self-pity and loneliness," said one sister whose marriage ties had been severed. Such "reaching out" by a separated or divorced person might include inviting a family to one's home for an evening of spiritually upbuilding association. If this is rarely possible for financial or other reasons, you might visit and encourage the sick or others. You might also be able to help the elderly with their shopping or various chores. Give of yourself in such ways, and you will have increased evidence that "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

¹³ Another aid to overcoming loneliness is regularly taking the initiative to join fellow believers in the Kingdom-preaching work. "At times, I do feel lonely for a husband," admitted one sister, "but with my increased field-service activity and the new freedom to associate with the brothers and sisters, these periods are very infrequent and short-lived." Regular house-to-house witnessing may lead to return visits and home Bible

12. A person might lessen his or her loneliness by taking what positive action?

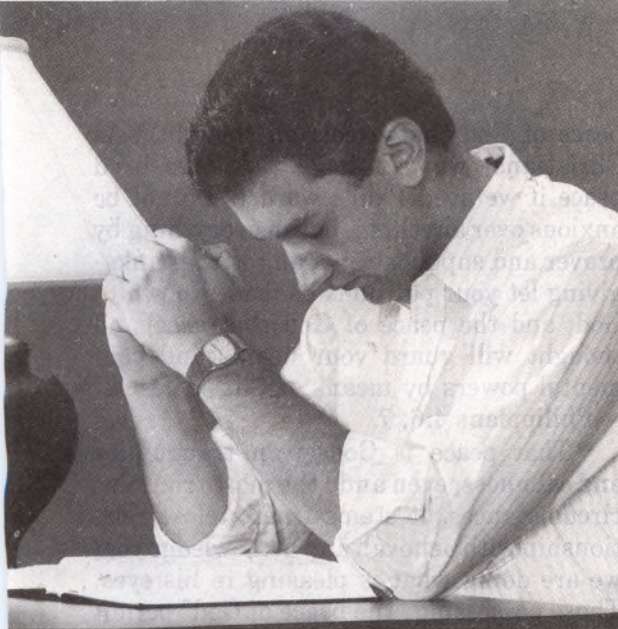
13. What is another aid to overcoming loneliness?

In Our Next Issue

■ A New World Near!

■ Who Will Become Approved by Jehovah?

■ "Spiritual Words" for the Mentally Distressed



***Prayer can bring all faithful Christians
"the peace of God" that will guard
their hearts and mental powers***

studies with interested people, some of whom may become dedicated servants of Jehovah. Of course, overcoming loneliness is not our reason for engaging in the ministry, but that may be one effect of this joyous and blessed activity.—Proverbs 10:22.

¹⁴ All of Jehovah's people can benefit spiritually from sharing in the ministry, participating in Christian meetings, and 'seeking first the Kingdom.' (Matthew 6:33) Since these wholesome activities have a fine effect on Jehovah's servants in general, such pursuits can upbuild separated or divorced Christians too. No, these activities will not solve all their problems, but they should improve their outlook.

Prayer Plays a Vital Role

¹⁵ One Christian sister who had to adjust to singleness once again was helped by "keeping busy in field service . . . and

14. What activities should have a good effect on separated or divorced Christians?

15. Prayer can play what role in the lives of those who must adjust to singleness once again?

visiting the ill, elderly, and inactive ones." But she added: "Whenever I feel lonely, I do visiting and pray for strength, knowing that Satan is very busy." Yes, heartfelt prayer is vital if integrity to God is to be maintained. The prayers of separated or divorced Christians can include requests for Jehovah's spirit and its fruit of self-control so as to keep sexual impulses in check. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22, 23; Colossians 3:5, 6) Moreover, since the making of decisions once made by a husband may pose problems for some separated or divorced women, they may also need to pray for God's help in deciding matters wisely and coping with various trials.—James 1:2-8.

¹⁶ Feelings of guilt may prove to be troublesome. One Christian admitted: "The guilt that you feel during a divorce, even if you are not the guilty party, can be overwhelming." Of course, guilt feelings are understandable if separation or divorce occurred because one unjustifiably refused to fulfill marital obligations. (1 Corinthians 7:3-5) But if separation or divorce took place for a Scriptural reason after prayerful thought, it would be fitting to pray for Jehovah's help to overcome unwarranted guilt feelings. It may be added that congregation elders should be careful to give Bible-based counsel and not weight their advice in such a way that a Christian is made to feel guilty about obtaining or permitting a Biblically allowable separation or divorce.

Guarded by "the Peace of God"

¹⁷ Separated or divorced Christians often have unique problems. Yet, to some extent, "the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of [our] brothers in the world."

16. In connection with separation or divorce, what might be said about feelings of guilt?

17. What can help all Christians to be happy and stable in this troubled world?

(1 Peter 5:6-11) For example, persecution affects all who serve Jehovah, and most Christians face financial or health problems, disappointments, temptations, and so forth. Like other witnesses of Jehovah, therefore, the separated or divorced Christian needs to keep meeting spiritual needs by Bible study, regular meeting attendance, active field ministry, a rounded-out life of sacred service, and constant prayer so as to remain close to Jehovah. (Matthew 5:3) Failure to do so would jeopardize the spirituality of any Christian, whereas 'seeking first the Kingdom' gives each loyal witness of Jehovah a notable measure of happiness and stability in this troubled world.

¹⁸ Our spiritual stability depends on personal application of God's Word. Therefore, if you are a Christian separated from a marriage mate who is also dedicated to God, have you taken to heart Paul's counsel at 1 Corinthians 7:10-16? Particularly if the separation has continued for some time, you would do well to make reconciliation a matter of earnest prayer. You might also ask yourself: What does Jehovah expect of me as a married person? Should not Christian mates harmonize their lives with divine requirements for those who have entered wedlock? Could it be that we are not experiencing Jehovah's blessing because we have failed to honor our marriage vows? Just think of the good that might be accomplished if you were to discuss matters humbly, pray earnestly, and work diligently to apply God's Word in life. How fine it would be if the two of you could resolve your marital problems and again enjoy life together in a home of rest and peace!

¹⁹ All faithful servants of Jehovah need and can enjoy something precious—"the

18. What questions and steps merit serious thought by separated Christian mates?

19. According to Philippians 4:6, 7, what precious thing can all servants of Jehovah enjoy?

peace of God that excels all thought." As Christians, we can have this treasured peace if we heed Paul's words: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:6, 7.

²⁰ That peace is God-given tranquillity and calmness, even amid the most trialsome circumstances. It stems from a close relationship with Jehovah and a knowledge that we are doing what is pleasing in his eyes. Those possessing "the peace of God" permit his spirit to motivate them, and they are not overwhelmed by anxiety. Why? Because they know that nothing is allowed to happen to them that is not by divine permission. (Ephesians 4:30; compare Acts 11:26.) So whether we are single or married, separated or divorced, let us cherish "the peace of God." And may we have the same confidence as did David, who declared: "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for you yourself alone, O Jehovah, make me dwell in security."—Psalm 4:8.

20. (a) What is "the peace of God"? (b) Regardless of our marital status, what should we do?

How Would You Reply?

- ☐ Under what circumstances can it be said: "God has called you to peace"?
- ☐ How can loneliness be lessened?
- ☐ What role should prayer play in the life of a separated or divorced Christian?
- ☐ How would you define "the peace of God" that guards the hearts of single, married, separated, or divorced servants of Jehovah?

Questions From Readers

■ To what was Jesus referring as "these" when he asked the apostle Peter, "Do you love me more than these?"

The resurrected Jesus was at the Sea of Galilee. We read: "When, now, they had breakfasted, Jesus said to Simon Peter: 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him: 'Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you.' He said to him: 'Feed my lambs.'"—John 21:15.

While the gender of a Greek pronoun sometimes indicates its subject, the plural *tou'ton* ("these") can have a masculine, feminine, or neuter subject. Consequently, scholars have suggested three possible meanings for Jesus' question:

1. Do you love me more than you love these other disciples?

2. Do you love me more than these disciples love me?

3. Do you love me more than these things, such as the fish?

Let us reason on these three to see which is the most probable.

Number 1. Frankly, few Christians can imagine Christ's asking, 'Do you love me more than you love the disciples?' Of course we should! It would seem especially strange to ask Peter such a question. He had just been in the boat with six other disciples, but when he recognized Jesus on the shore, Peter abandoned the disciples and swam to shore. Showing similar attachment, when Christ had asked whether the apostles wanted to go off with those who were stumbled, Peter said that he was determined to stay by Jesus.—John 6:66-69; 21:7, 8.

Number 2. What about the possibility that Jesus meant, 'Peter, do you have more love for me than the other disciples have?' Many commentators have espoused this view, since Peter earlier pro-

fessed that he was more loyal to Jesus than the others. (Matthew 26:33-35) Yet, understanding John 21:15 in this way requires that an unstated verb be implied, such as "Do you love me more than these [do]?" But such an extra verb is not in Jesus' question, and it presents grammatical difficulties. Moreover, it would seem out of place for Jesus to ask Peter to compare the amount of his love to the amount of love that others might have. Did not Jesus correct the apostles when they fell into rivalry?—Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-44; Luke 22:24-27.

Could it be, then, that Number 3 was what Jesus was asking, 'Do you love me more than these things, such as the fish?' This possibility fits the way the question is phrased in Greek, for Peter was being asked to choose between two things (between Jesus and "these"). Such a question would also be appropriate in view of Peter's past. He had been one of the first disciples to follow Jesus. (John 1:35-42) Apparently, though, Peter did not immediately follow Jesus full-time. Rather, he returned to his fishing. Thus, some months later Jesus called Peter

away from that substantial business to become a 'fisher of men.' (Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 5:1-11) Nonetheless, after Jesus' death, Peter initiated a return to this career, telling some of the disciples: "I am going fishing."—John 21:2, 3.

So it is quite possible that Jesus was driving home to Peter the need for making a decisive choice. What was he going to put foremost in life—being a follower of Jesus or pursuing a career, as suggested by the fish piled before them? How significant a place did the fish, the nets, the boats, and the camaraderie with fellow fishermen hold in Peter's heart? Would Peter truly abandon those enjoyable things to put foremost his love for Christ and the consequent feeding of Jesus' "little sheep"?—John 21:17.

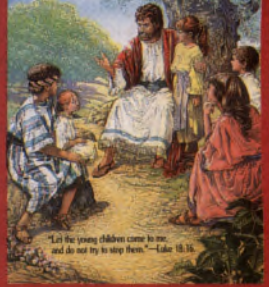
We can ask ourselves a similar question involving 'these things' that might attract us, such as our interesting job or business, our enjoyment of secular education, our home, or our favorite form of recreation. We can frankly ponder: 'Do I love Jesus more than any or all of these things?' Jesus showed that if our answer is yes, we will be showing it by feeding the "little sheep."

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Listening to the Great Teacher



"Let the young children come to me,
and do not try to stop them."—Luke 10:36