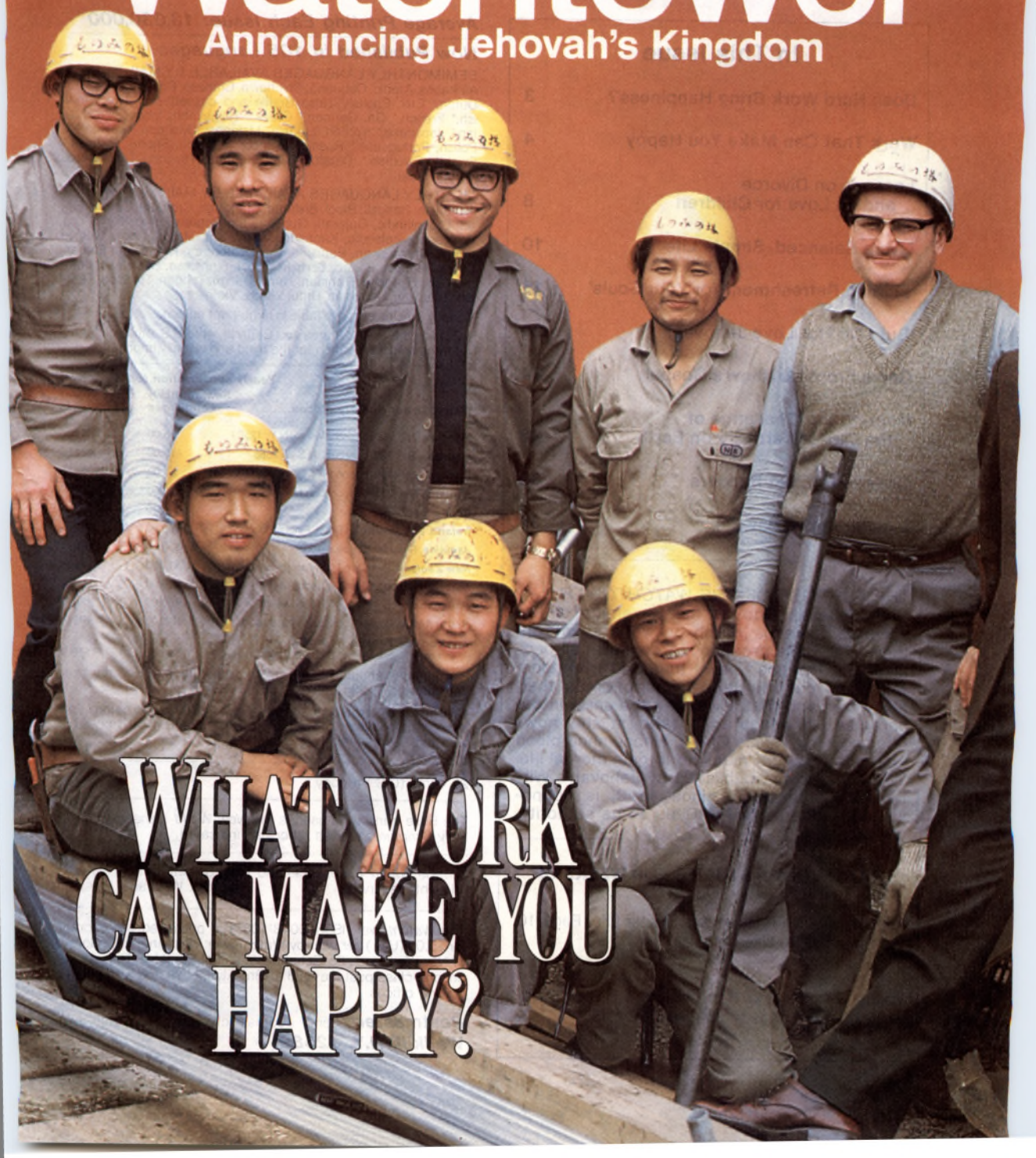
The Watchtower
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom
July 15, 1989



WHAT WORK CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY?

The Watchtower®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

July 15, 1989
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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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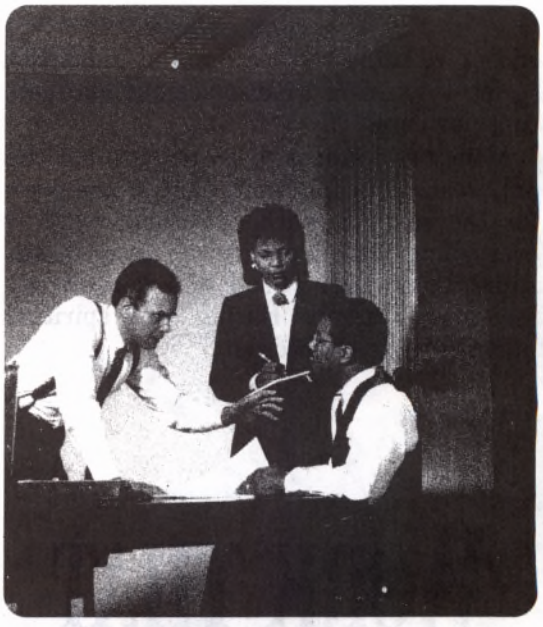
DOES HARD WORK BRING HAPPINESS?



"AFTER all, work is everything for a man, isn't it?" asked Bunpei Otsuki, a leading magnate in the Japanese business world. He was explaining why he did not want to take a summer vacation. His words are typical of the Japanese who reconstructed the country from its postwar chaos. The Japanese have been described as an industrious people ever since Commodore Perry of the United States opened Japan from its long period of seclusion. And they take pride in being hard workers.

However, Japan is now being criticized for working too hard, having the longest annual working hours among the so-called industrialized nations. The Japanese government is trying to blot out the workaholic image. "Labor Ministry Says 'Stop Working So Hard,'" reads one newspaper headline. In its campaign motto for the 1987 summer vacation period, the ministry even went as far as saying, "To take a vacation is proof of your competence." In other words, the government is asking the nation, "Why work so hard?"

Of course, not all in Japan are dedicated, hard workers. A recent Japan Productivity Center survey of more than 7,000 new workers revealed that only 7 percent of them gave priority to a job over private life. This trend can be seen in other countries too. In Germany the Allensbacher Institut für Demoskopie learned that only 19 percent of Germans in the 18 to 29 age bracket claimed that they give their best at work irrespective of remuneration.

Compared to the easygoing youth, guest workers in Japan are far more hardworking. An employer in Tokyo talks glowingly of his Algerian employee who does manual work. He says: "Japanese will not apply for this kind of job, and even if they did, they would quit immediately." No, not even hardworking Japanese are innately diligent. When people work hard, there must be strong motivation.

Reasons for Working Hard

"Wealth, stability, possessions, and getting on in the world"—these are the things that hardworking Germans are after, reports the German weekly *Der Spiegel*. Yes, many work hard to gain material wealth so they can enjoy a measure of stability in life. Others work hard with the objective of "getting on in the world" or moving up the corporate ladder. Many who are strongly motivated by the competitive educational system to pursue such goals unfortunately

end up running the treadmill of industrial society—wearing themselves out and getting nowhere.

Money and status, however, are not the only reasons people work hard. Some work for the sake of work. To them, work is everything. Others enjoy their work. "I was so intrigued with what I was doing in my laboratory," admits Haruo, "that spiritual pursuits were choked out."

WORK THAT CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY

"I REALLY loved my work as a printer," says Antonio in Genoa, Italy. "I was well-paid, and this made me work many hours of overtime. In just a few years, in spite of my young age, I became my employers' right-hand man." Antonio seemed to have attained the goals that move many to work hard: wealth, status, and an absorbing job that he enjoyed.

Was Antonio 'seeing good for all his hard work'? (Ecclesiastes 3:13) And was such work really making him happy? "Because of the tension caused by our frenetic lifestyle," he continues, "we began having problems as a family. This made us unhappy." Neither Antonio nor his wife was happy despite their fulfilling jobs. How about you? Are you 'seeing good for all your hard work'? Is your work really making you happy?

Then there are those who are dedicated to worthwhile causes for the service and welfare of others. They work hard to save lives. For instance, a fire fighter works hard every day to keep his equipment in order.

But are these all sound reasons for working hard? Will they lead to happiness? Indeed, what work can really make you happy?

Valid Motives?

A major reason for working hard is to make a living. In some countries, people must work long hours just to get by. Some

slave away day and night so that their children will have a better life. Still others work compulsively to accumulate riches.

Leonida in the Philippines had two jobs. She worked at a bank during the day and taught at a college three or four hours in the evening. Was the extra money worth it? "I was always watching the clock," she explains. "I was bored. I was doing it with no satisfaction."

No, working just for money does not result in true satisfaction and happiness. "Do not toil to gain riches," counsels wise King Solomon, "for without fail it makes wings for itself like those of an eagle and flies away toward the heavens." (Proverbs 23:4, 5) Some eagles reportedly fly at speeds of up to 80 miles per hour. This well illustrates the swiftness with which hard-earned riches can fly away. Even if a person accumulates wealth, when he dies he cannot carry anything away with him.—Ecclesiastes 5:15; Luke 12:13-21.

Being absorbed in making a living sometimes poses grave dangers. It may lead to love of money. In the first century, there was a group of religionists called Pharisees who were known for their love of money. (Luke 16:14) As an ex-Pharisee, the Christian apostle Paul was fully aware of their life-style. (Philippians 3:5) "Those who are determined to be rich," warns Paul, "fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have . . . stabbed themselves all over with many pains." (1 Timothy 6:9, 10) Yes, "love of money," doing anything and everything for it, can ruin one's life. Such a course does not result in happiness.

For some, their motive in exerting themselves is to go up the corporate ladder. Nevertheless, they eventually face a reality. "Baby-boomers," says *Fortune* magazine, "who made sacrifices in their 20s and early 30s to reach middle management are coming to the nasty but inevitable realization that, despite tons of hard work, not everybody will make it to the top. Staggering from exertion, they're tempted to ask what it's all about. Why fight so hard? Who cares?"

The life of one such man, Mizumori, had been centered around getting ahead in the world. Pursuing a career in managerial positions with one of the biggest banks in Japan, he did not have time for his family. After working hard for over 30 years, his health was ruined, and he certainly was not happy. "I realized," he says, "that the rivalry for positions among the people who try to stand out as prominent 'is vanity and a striving after the wind.'"—Ecclesiastes 4:4.

But how about those like Antonio, who enjoy their work? Fascinated by his work, Antonio sacrificed his family life on the altar of work. Others sacrifice their health and even their lives, as indicated by the sudden death of many prominent and overworked Japanese executives. A counseling service for their bereaved ones received a surprising 135 calls in just one day.

Some devote their lives to helping others. Jesus encouraged this spirit. (Matthew 7:12; John 15:13) Keeping busy in the worthwhile work of helping others really does bring happiness.—Proverbs 11:25.

However, such noble-minded industriousness is not free of pitfalls. For instance, Judean king Uzziah engaged in a massive civil work of hewing out cisterns in the wilderness. Uzziah must have had the benefit of his people in mind, as he was "searching for Jehovah" at that time and evidently heeded the divine mandate that the kings be unselfish. (2 Chronicles 26:5, 10; Deuteronomy 17:14-20) This enhanced his military success, and "his fame went out to a great distance." But upon becoming

strong, he became haughty, resulting in his fall. (2 Chronicles 26:15-20; Proverbs 16: 18) One who is devoted to helping others but who is motivated by self-gratification and pride can also end up in a crash. Then, why should anyone want to work hard?

Man Made to Work

We can learn much about work from a man who accomplished far greater good than any other human who ever lived on earth. He is Jesus Christ. (Matthew 20:28; John 21:25) When he died on the torture stake, he exclaimed, "It has been accomplished!" (John 19:30) His life of 33½ years had been fulfilling.

Jesus' life helps to answer the question, "What work can make you happy?" It was the accomplishing of his heavenly Father's will that brought him incomparable happiness. Likewise, doing the will of our Creator can give us a feeling of accomplishment and make us happy. Why? Because He knows our makeup and our needs even more than we do.

When God created the first man, Adam, He gave him both manual and mental work to do. (Genesis 2:15, 19) 'Having in subjection' all other earthly creatures, Adam had managerial work to do as well. (Genesis 1:28) As long as Adam abided by this arrangement, his work remained meaningful and worthwhile. Each small work assignment meant another opportunity to please the Most High.

This, however, did not continue to be the case with Adam. He decided to break away from God's arrangement. Adam no longer took delight in doing the will of God but wanted to do what he pleased. He sinned against the Creator. As a result of his decision, Adam, his wife, and all his offspring were "subjected to futility." (Romans 5:12; 8:20) Instead of bringing happiness, work became a drudgery. God's sentence against Adam included these words: "Cursed is the ground on your account. In pain you will eat its produce all the days of your life. And thorns and thistles it will grow for you, and you must eat the vegetation of the field. In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground." (Genesis 3: 17-19) Work, which should have been dignified in having as its ultimate goal the pleasing of man's Creator, now meant only painful labor just to earn one's own bread.

What conclusion can we draw from these facts? This: Hard work brings lasting satisfaction and happiness only when we center our lives around doing the divine will.

'See Good' in Doing God's Will

Doing the divine will was like food to Jesus Christ—something to be enjoyed and to sustain his spiritual life. (John 4:34) How can such enjoyment of work be yours?

You must perceive "what the will of Jehovah is" for you. (Ephesians 5:17) His will is for mankind to be restored to "the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Romans 8:21; 2 Peter 3:9) Now the worldwide gathering work to accomplish this is taking place. You too may have a part in this most satisfying work. Such work will surely make you happy.

Antonio, mentioned at the outset, later found satisfaction and happiness. When he and his wife put their "futile" secular jobs first in their life and were deeply involved in them, their spiritual life suffered. That was when they started having domestic problems. Realizing the situation, his wife decided to quit her job and started to 'exert herself vigorously' in doing the work of preaching about God's Kingdom full-time. —Luke 13:24.

"Immediately," says Antonio, "we noticed a great change. No more constant quarrelling. Peace returned to our family." His wife reaped the joy of helping others to gain the knowledge that means "everlasting life." (John 17:3) Her happiness moved

Centering your family life around Bible study and the doing of God's will is the key to enjoying the fruitage of hard work

Antonio to reevaluate what really is worthwhile. His desire to serve God whole-souled won out. He turned down an offer for promotion and resigned from his secular work. Although the change meant his taking a more humble job, both Antonio and his wife are happy to be spending most of their time in the Christian ministry, doing God's will.

Of course, not all are in a position to make such great changes. Mizumori, the Japanese banker mentioned earlier, enjoys his ministry as an elder in a Christian congregation and still supports his family with his secular job, where he holds a managerial position. However, his life is no longer centered around his secular work but revolves around the doing of God's will. His secular work is the means that sustains him and enables him to accomplish that objective. Now working secularly is also meaningful.

When you cultivate this view toward your employment, you will no doubt exert yourself "not with acts of eye-service, as men pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, with fear of Jehovah." (Colossians 3:22) Such sincerity may not seem to go a long way in this competitive society, but, as Mizumori admits, by applying such principles, you will be trusted and esteemed. Although he stopped working for promotion, it came his way.—Proverbs 22:29.

Yes, centering your life around the doing of God's will is the key to finding happiness in hard work. That is why wise King Solomon concluded: "There is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good during one's life; and also that every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God." —Ecclesiastes 3:12, 13.

Lessons on Divorce and on Love for Children

JESUS and his disciples are on their way to Jerusalem to attend the Passover of 33 C.E. They cross the Jordan River and take the route through the district of Perea. Jesus was in Perea a few weeks earlier, but then he was summoned to Judea because his friend Lazarus was sick. While then in Perea, Jesus spoke to the Pharisees about divorce, and now they bring the matter up again.

Among the Pharisees there are different schools of thought about divorce. Moses said that a woman could be divorced because of "something indecent on her part." Some believe that this refers only to unchastity. But others consider "something indecent" to include very minor offenses. So, intent on tempting Jesus, the Pharisees ask: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on every sort of ground?" They are confident that whatever Jesus says will involve him in difficulty with Pharisees who hold a different view.

Jesus handles the question masterfully, not appealing to any human opinion, but referring back to the original design of marriage. "Did you not read," he asks, "that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh'? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart."

God's original purpose, Jesus shows, is that marriage mates stick together, that they not get a divorce. If that is so, the Pharisees respond, "why, then, did Moses prescribe giving a certificate of dismissal and divorcing her?"

"Moses, out of regard for your hardheartedness, made the concession to you of divorcing your wives," Jesus answers, "but such has not been the case from the beginning." Yes, when God established the true standard for marriage in the garden of Eden, he made no provision for divorce.

Jesus goes on to tell the Pharisees: "I say to you that whoever divorces

his wife, except on the ground of fornication [Greek, *por·nei'a*], and marries another commits adultery." He thereby shows that *por·nei'a,* which is gross sexual immorality, is the only ground approved by God for a divorce.

Realizing that marriage should be a lasting union with only this ground for divorce, the disciples are moved to say: "If such is the situation of a man with his wife, it is not advisable to marry." There is no question that one who is contemplating marriage should seriously consider the permanence of the marital bond!

Jesus goes on to talk about singleness. He explains that some boys are born eunuchs, being incapable of marriage because of not developing sexually. Others have been made eunuchs by men, being cruelly disabled sexually. Finally, some suppress the desire to marry and to enjoy sex relations so that they can devote themselves more fully to matters relating to the Kingdom of the heavens. "Let him that can make room for [singleness] make room for it," Jesus concludes.

People now begin to bring their young children to Jesus. The disciples, however, scold the children and try to send them away, no doubt wanting to protect Jesus from unnecessary stress. But Jesus says: "Let the young children come to me; do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such-like ones. Truly I say to you, Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a young child will by no means enter into it."

What fine lessons Jesus here provides! To receive God's Kingdom, we must imitate the humility and teachableness of young children. But Jesus' example also illustrates how important it is, especially for parents, to spend time with their children. Jesus now shows his love for little ones by taking them into his arms and blessing them.

Matthew 19:1-15; Deuteronomy 24:1; Luke 16:18; Mark 10:1-16; Luke 18:15-17.

- What different views do the Pharisees have on divorce, and so how do they try to tempt Jesus?
- How does Jesus deal with the Pharisees' effort to tempt him, and what does he give as the only ground for divorce?
- Why do Jesus' disciples say it is not advisable to marry, and what recommendation does Jesus provide?
- What does Jesus teach us by his dealings with young children?

Live a Balanced, Simple Life

"Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons . . . because the days are wicked."—EPHESIANS 5:15, 16.

IT IS a challenge to sort out priorities, juggle responsibilities, and devote time and energy to the important aspects of life in a reasonable way. It is also a challenge to avoid extremes and maintain mental and emotional steadiness. —Ephesians 5:17; 1 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 1:13.

[2] This challenge might be compared to that faced by a performer who attempts to walk on a thin high wire. Loss of balance would be a disaster for him. Similarly, the loss of spiritual balance would be disastrous for us. A person walking a

1, 2. What is a real challenge today, and with what may it be compared?

high wire surely does not burden himself with many things. He carries only the essentials. In order to maintain our spiritual balance, therefore, we need to live a simple, unburdened life.—Hebrews 12: 1, 2.

[3] If we are to live a simple life, we must involve ourselves only with the things needed to maintain a reasonable livelihood. In contrast with what his disciples should seek—God's Kingdom and His righteousness—Jesus Christ spoke of "the things the nations are eagerly pursuing." (Matthew 6:32, 33) So Jesus admonished us to avoid accumulating a lot of these things. Why? Because they can complicate our life and lead us astray. (Luke 12: 16-21; 18:25) This is good counsel, regardless of whether we are wealthy or poor, well-educated or not.

Why So Important Now

[4] Living a balanced, simple life is especially important now because Satan and his demons have been confined to the earth and are intent on weighing us down and diverting our attention from God's service. (Revelation 12:7-12, 17) Therefore, never before has the Bible command been more applicable: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked." (Ephesians 5:15, 16) Yes, we are living in Satan's wicked world, not God's new world. Hence, we cannot afford to become complacent.—2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Peter 3:7, 13.

[5] Servants of God who lived in this Devil-ruled world in ancient times set us a fine example. They "publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land." Therefore, they sought "a better place, that is, one belonging to heaven." (Hebrews 11:13-16) Their allegiance was to God's heavenly Kingdom, even as ours should be. For this reason, the apostle Peter called Christians "aliens and temporary residents." (1 Peter 2:11; Philippians 3:20) In fact, Jesus said that his true followers "are no part of the world." This means, as the apostle Paul said, that Christians should not 'be using the world to the full.'—John 17:16; 1 Corinthians 7:31.

[6] So we always need to remember that this world belonging to Satan is dangerous territory in which to live. A misstep can mean disaster. (1 John 5:19; 1 Peter 5:8) Our situation might be compared to that of a person walking through a field mined with explosives. Citing a warning example for Christians, the apostle Paul told of the Israelites who were ready to enter the Promised Land. Many lost their spiritual balance, became involved in immorality, and were put to death by God. "Consequently," Paul wrote, "let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not [lose his spiritual balance and] fall." —1 Corinthians 10:12.

Why It Is a Protection

[7] Living a balanced, simple life will protect you because it will allow you more time and energy for spiritual things. So wisely ask yourself: Am I simplifying my life, or am I complicating it? What things really come first in my life? Some say they have little time to study the Bible or to share in the field ministry. But what is the reason? Likely, it is their failure to live a

3. What must we do to live a simple life?
4. Why is living a balanced, simple life so vital now?
5. How did servants of God in ancient times set us a fine example?
6. (a) What do we need to remember, and to what can our situation be compared? (b) What warning example should all of us heed?
7. What self-examination should we wisely make?

balanced, simple life. Why not compare the amount of time you spend on recreation, such as watching television, with the time you spend serving Jehovah in one sphere of Christian activity or another? Is your use of time balanced? Simplifying your life will allow you time for the more important things, which include sharing to a greater extent in the all-important spiritual harvest.—Philippians 1:9, 10; Matthew 9:37.

[8] Actually, your spiritual activity is a measure of whether you are living a balanced, simple life. Christians who are heeding Jesus' admonition to seek first God's Kingdom are moving ahead at a good pace in regular Bible study, meeting attendance, and the field ministry. Such forward movement is a real protection against falling. It might be compared to riding a bicycle. Those who have tried to balance a bicycle that has slowed down practically to a standstill appreciate the importance of forward momentum. Similarly, as long as you are moving ahead at a good pace in a routine of spiritual activity, you are protected from losing your balance and falling.—Philippians 3:16.

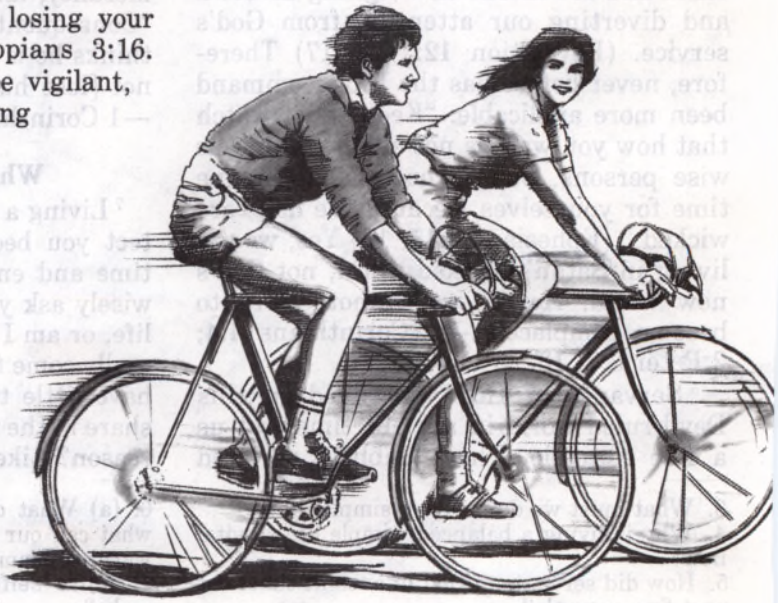
[9] Yet, there is a need to be vigilant, to remember that unburdening ourselves of things can allow more time for study, for meeting preparation, and for helping others. "Whenever I'm tempted to buy something I don't need, or take on work I don't need," said one Christian businessman, "I stop myself with the reminder to *keep it simple.* Sometimes I have to be blunt with myself." Is that not a good reminder for all of us? When you contemplate some project, perhaps building an addition to your house or something else, why not ask yourself: Is this going to contribute to my spirituality and that of my family or is it going to hinder it? Do I really need all the things that people of the world eagerly pursue, or can I do without them?

[10] However, someone might object: 'Is such self-sacrifice really necessary? Are we required to live a balanced, simple life?' Well, Paul spoke of "the things of a man" and "the things of God" and said: "A physical man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot get to know them, because they are examined spiritually. However, the spiritual man examines

8. How does one heed Jesus' admonition to seek first the Kingdom, and what illustrates the importance of forward momentum?

9. (a) What is a good reminder for all of us? (b) When contemplating a project, what questions might we ask ourselves?

10. How do the views of a "physical man" contrast with those of a "spiritual man"?



indeed all things." (1 Corinthians 2:11, 14, 15) You could easily become a "physical man" by seeking out and acquiring unnecessary things of a material nature. In such a case, self-sacrifice looks excessive, even ridiculous. But that is the view of a "physical man," not the view of a "spiritual man."

[11] A spiritual man is one who views matters through the eyes of faith. He sees things from God's viewpoint. Consider Noah. Would he have been balanced if, after learning of God's purpose to destroy the world by a flood, he had spent his time building a bigger and better home and obtaining more material possessions? Of course not! The ark was his true security. For Noah, living a balanced, simple life involved devoting full attention to building the ark and being "a preacher of righteousness," despite the ridicule of faithless 'physical men.' (2 Peter 2:5; Matthew 24:37-39) Similarly, since we have been enlightened about the imminence of the world's end, the only balanced way of life for us is to focus our attention on doing God's will and proclaiming the good news, even though that may involve what many view as sacrificing a so-called normal way of life.—1 John 2:17.

11. What would have been an unbalanced course for Noah, and how do we live a balanced life today?

Jesus Taught Us How

[12] In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave fine counsel on living a balanced, simple life. He said: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal." Jesus used the word "stop" because people usually just keep on "storing up" material things for themselves. But a person who becomes Jesus' disciple cannot be doing this anymore. His life must have a different purpose, as shown by Jesus' follow-up command: "Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal." Giving the reason why this change of purpose is needed, Jesus said: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."—Matthew 6:19-21.

[13] Your treasure is what you consider truly important. Are material possessions your treasure? Or is it the sanctification of Jehovah God's name and his promised reward? To spend your life storing up treasures in heaven rather than on earth, you must be thoroughly convinced of the Kingdom's reality. The new world must be so real to you that you can see it in your mind's eye and see yourself there working

12. (a) What did Jesus say we should stop doing, and what should we do instead? (b) Why is this change of purpose needed?
13. If you are to store up treasures in heaven, of what must you be convinced?

toward the accomplishment of Jehovah's purposes for the earth. Like Moses, you must 'see the One who is invisible' and be firmly convinced that 'he will reward those earnestly seeking him.'—Hebrews 11:6, 27.

[14] But what if your heart, which includes your desires and affections, is set on material treasures? The Bible says: "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." Pursuing material things that money can buy simply does not provide true and lasting satisfaction. (1 Timothy 6:10; Ecclesiastes 5:10) But most tragic of all, love of money and material things will damage your relationship with God, who expects us to serve him with "a complete heart."—1 Chronicles 28:9.

[15] To help us avoid the snare of materialism, Jesus gave two illustrations. First, he said: "The lamp of the body is the eye. If, then, your eye is simple, your whole body will be bright; but if your eye is wicked, your whole body will be dark." (Matthew 6:22, 23) In a physical sense, a "simple" eye is one that is in focus, conveying clear images to the mind. An unfocused eye conveys confused and blurred images. Similarly, a spiritual eye that is "simple," or in focus, conveys a clear image of God's Kingdom, not a blurry, out-of-focus picture that makes the new world seem like some fairy tale or myth. If your spiritual eye is in focus, God's promised new world will be as real to you as the Kingdom was to the three apostles who were privileged to see a preview of it in the miraculous vision of Jesus' transfiguration.—Matthew 16:28–17:9; John 1:14; 2 Peter 1:16-19.

[16] Jesus gave a second illustration. "No one can slave for two masters," he said, "for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other." Driving home the point, he again emphasized the need to show singleness of purpose, saying: "You cannot slave for God and for Riches." (Matthew 6:24) That simply will not work. So Jesus continued: "On this account I say to you: Stop being anxious about your souls as to what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your bodies as to what you will wear. . . . For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things."—Matthew 6:25-32.

[17] Jesus did not mean that his followers should leave the providing of material necessities to chance or that they should be lazy and refuse to work in order to provide for themselves and their families. (1 Timothy 5:8) No, but the point is that these material things eagerly pursued by the nations should not take priority. Rather, as Jesus admonished: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) So Jesus was here talking about goals in life and was emphasizing the futility of pursuing material things. Living a balanced, simple life involves focusing our eyes singly on Kingdom interests, making everything else secondary.

14. What will be the consequences if our hearts are set on material things?
15. (a) What illustration did Jesus give concerning the eye? (b) In both a physical and a spiritual sense, how does a person maintain a simple eye? (c) If our eye is simple, how will our spiritual vision be like that of three of Jesus' apostles?

16. In a second illustration, how did Jesus show the need for singleness of purpose?
17. (a) What point was Jesus making by his instructions regarding material things? (b) What was Jesus here emphasizing, and what does living a balanced, simple life involve?

Example of Jesus and Others

[18] When urging Christians to "put off every weight and the sin [of lack or loss of faith] that easily entangles us," Paul urged: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus." (Hebrews 12:1, 2) Jesus was so exclusively devoted to Kingdom interests that his situation was as he described: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." (Matthew 8:20) At the same time, Jesus was not an ascetic. The Scriptures show that he enjoyed fine food and clothing, yet his principal goal in life was to accomplish his ministry. Thus Jesus lived a balanced, simple life.—Luke 5:29; John 19:23, 24.

[19] The apostle Paul too had his priorities in proper order. He explained: "I do not make my soul of any account as dear to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received of the Lord Jesus, to bear thorough witness to the good news." (Acts 20:24) Yes, to fulfill the all-important ministry, Paul was content with the bare necessities but was pleased to enjoy an abundance occasionally. He wrote: "In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to suffer want."—Philippians 4:12.

[20] Literally tens of thousands of persons have learned the same lesson today. Many of them are full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses, including missionaries, pioneers, traveling overseers, and those serving at the organization's international headquarters and branch offices. After years of full-time service, most say: "If I had it to do over, I would not do anything differently."

18. How did Jesus set the right example for us?
19, 20. (a) What example did Paul set regarding material things? (b) What lesson have many learned today, and how do they feel about their life course?

Blessings You Can Enjoy

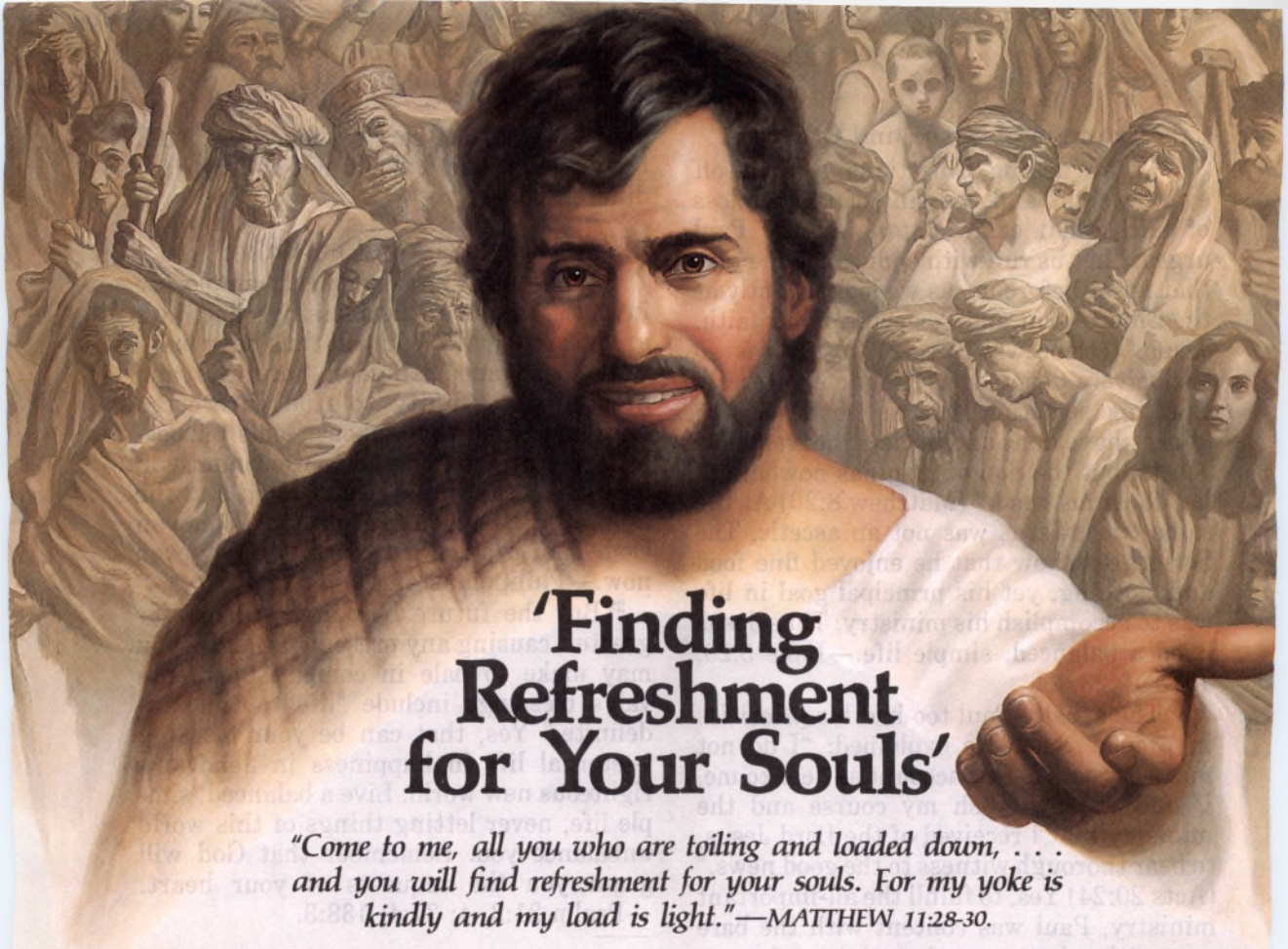
[21] While leading a balanced, simple life involves sacrifice, the blessings and joys are incomparable. You will thus have more time to advance Kingdom interests and greater opportunity to find interested ones and teach them about God's purposes. True satisfaction and contentment will be yours, including peace of mind and the assurance that you are pleasing Jehovah God. That is a reward you may enjoy even now.—Philippians 4:6, 7.

[22] But the future blessings will be far greater, causing any present sacrifices you may make to pale in comparison. Jehovah's blessings include "life to time indefinite." Yes, that can be your blessing —eternal life in happiness in Jehovah's righteous new world. Live a balanced, simple life, never letting things of this world unbalance you. Remember that God will grant you the requests of your heart. —Psalm 21:3, 4; 37:4; 133:3.

21, 22. (a) What rewards are enjoyed even now when we live a balanced, simple life? (b) What future blessings can you enjoy?

Questions for Review

- ☐ What examples and illustrations did you note that can help you to live a balanced, simple life?
- ☐ How will living a balanced, simple life protect us?
- ☐ If our spiritual eye is simple, what will this mean to us?
- ☐ How did Jesus teach us to live a simple life?
- ☐ What are the blessings of living a balanced, simple life?



'Finding Refreshment for Your Souls'

"Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, . . . and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light."—MATTHEW 11:28-30.

"WE KNOW that all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now." That is what a man wrote to friends in Rome centuries ago. (Romans 8:22) In the years since then, the groaning and pain of the human family as a whole have only increased. Prejudice, poverty, crime, and hunger have taken a tragic toll everywhere. The unjust economic system forces millions out of jobs and even out of their homes, and satanic influences undermine efforts to bring up children in the way they should go.

[2] But perhaps the greatest tragedy occurs when sickness, disease, or old age saps people of their strength and robs them of their dignity as they deteriorate to mere shells of their former selves. The terrible pain and suffering, often lasting for weeks, months, and at times even years, make hearts ache and cause rivers of tears to flow. What a sad commentary on life! Concerning the plight of man, a wise king of long ago said: "All his days his occupation means pains and vexation." (Ecclesiastes 2:23; 4:1) Life today surely is not what God originally purposed it to be!—Genesis 2:8, 9.

[3] Jehovah God created man perfect, with

1, 2. What has been the situation of the human family for centuries, and how does this contrast with what God originally purposed?

3. With what potential did God create man, and how is it presently being realized to a limited extent?

the potential of really enjoying life. (Deuteronomy 32:4, 5) Just think of the delight of tasting a fine meal, breathing enjoyably clean air, or viewing a gorgeous sunset! "I have seen the occupation that God has given to the sons of mankind in which to be occupied," observed the same wise king of long ago. "Everything he has made pretty in its time. . . . I have come to know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good during one's life; and also that every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God."—Ecclesiastes 3:10-13.

[4] Yet, how few are able to enjoy the good things God purposed for us! Jesus Christ was aware of the wretched, pathetic condition of mankind. "Great crowds approached him," the Bible says, "having along with them people that were lame, maimed, blind, dumb, and many otherwise, and they fairly threw them at his feet." How Jesus pitied such unfortunate individuals! (Matthew 9:36; 15:30) On one occasion, he extended the heartwarming invitation: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matthew 11:28, 29) Surely, these are hope-inspiring words! But what refreshment was Jesus talking about? And how can we find it?

The Truth That Refreshes

[5] When Jesus attended the Festival of Tabernacles about six months before his death, he pointed to the way to become free and thus receive true refreshment. Addressing those who had put faith in him, he said: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31, 32) What truth was Jesus talking about? From what will it free us? In what way were his listeners slaves?

[6] Religious opposers interrupted Jesus, asserting: "We are Abraham's offspring and never have we been slaves to anybody. How is it you say, 'You will become free'?" Those Jewish opposers were proud of their heritage. Even though the nation had often come under foreign domination, the Jews refused to be called slaves. But Jesus showed in what way they were slaves, saying: "Most truly I say to you, Every doer of sin is a slave of sin." Yes, all his listeners were 'doers of sin,' even as are all of us today. This is because all of us have inherited sin from our original parents. But Jesus promised: "If the Son sets you free, you will be actually free."—John 8:33-36; Romans 5:12.

[7] True freedom can thus be realized only by means of God's Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his perfect human life as a ransom sacrifice. It is this sacrifice that frees us from death-dealing sin and makes it possible for us to enjoy everlasting life in perfect health and happiness in God's righteous new world. (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10) Therefore, the truth that sets us free is the truth regarding Jesus Christ and his role in the fulfillment of God's purposes. The Kingdom, with Christ as King, is what will accomplish God's will for the earth, and Jesus continually bore witness regarding this truth.—John 18:37.

4. (a) As demonstrated by Jesus' experiences, what is the sad situation of so many? (b) What heartwarming invitation did Jesus extend, and what questions does this raise?
5. How did Jesus point the way to true freedom and refreshment for our souls?
6. (a) What objection did religious opposers raise, and why? (b) In what way are all of us slaves?
7. How can true freedom be realized, and what is the truth that sets us free?

How the Truth Refreshes

[8] The way the truth provides refreshment might be illustrated by a woman who has been told that she has a rapidly spreading form of cancer. The burden of that knowledge crushes her as she considers the painful, potentially devastating consequences. In time, however, she consults another doctor and undergoes further tests. When the results of the tests reveal that either the first diagnosis was in error or she has made a remarkable recovery, you can imagine the wonderful feeling of relief she experiences. How refreshing it is to her soul!

[9] Similarly, when Jesus came to the earth, the people were weighed down by the vain traditional systems of the day. Of the scribes and Pharisees who were responsible, Jesus said: "They bind up heavy loads and put them upon the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing to budge them with their finger." (Matthew 23:4; Mark 7:2-5) What a relief it was when Jesus provided the people with the truth that freed them from such enslaving traditions! (Matthew 15:1-9) It is no different today.

[10] Perhaps you were one who, because of the heavy burden of false religious teachings, lived in dread of suffering torment in hellfire or in purgatory after death. Or when a loved one died, you may have been crushed when a clergyman told you that God had taken your darling baby because He needed another angel—as if God needed your child more than you did. At times clergymen also tell people who are suffering some illness that this is a curse from God. Is it not truly refreshing to learn the Bible truths that relieve a person of such burdensome religious falsehoods? What feeling of relief this brings!—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Ezekiel 18:4; John 9:2, 3.

[11] One of the greatest burdens to carry is that of guilt because of the sins we have committed. It is a relief to know that because of the merit of Christ's ransom sacrifice, these sins can be removed. 'The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin,' the Bible assures us. (1 John 1:7) Despite any terrible things we may have done, if we have truly repented and mended our ways, we can enjoy the refreshing relief of a clean conscience and the assurance that God will no longer remember our sins. (Psalm 103:8-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Hebrews 10:21, 22) What refreshment Christ brought those burdened with sin, such as harlots and tax collectors like Zacchaeus! Jesus comforted them with Bible truths while he ate with them.—Luke 5:27-32; 7:36-50; 19:1-10.

[12] Many other people carry the heavy burdens of sickness and disease, severe depression, and the tremendous grief that comes with the death of a loved one. Jesus, however, brought refreshment to all such ones who were "toiling and loaded down." (Matthew 4:24; 11:28, 29) He cured one woman who had unsuccessfully sought help from physicians for 18 years. Jesus also healed a man who had been sick for 38 years, and another who had been born blind. Can you imagine their relief when Jesus healed them? (Luke 13:10-17; John 5:5-9; 9:1-7) The fact is that all those who

8. How might the way the truth provides refreshment be illustrated?
9. How did Jesus provide relief by teaching people the truth?
10. What joy-robbing burdens have many carried, and how may a person feel when these are removed as a result of his learning the truth?
11. (a) What is one of the greatest burdens, and how can it be removed? (b) What refreshment did Jesus bring sinners when he was on earth?
12. (a) To persons in what distressing situations did Jesus bring refreshment? (b) In the first century, to whom did Jesus demonstrate in a spectacular way that he is "the way and the truth and the life"?

came to Jesus in faith came to the source of truth, genuine refreshment, and life. To the widow who received her only son back from death and the parents whose dead 12-year-old daughter was returned alive to them, Jesus indeed proved in a spectacular way that he is "the way and the truth and the life."—John 14:6; 17:3; Luke 7: 11-17; 8:49-56.

[13] No doubt there are times when you are confronted with problems that are greater than you can handle personally. Jesus taught us to turn to Jehovah for help, even as he himself did. (Luke 22: 41-44; Hebrews 5:7) When we regularly turn to God in prayer, we come to share the feelings of the psalmist who wrote: "Blessed be Jehovah, who daily carries the load for us, the true God of our salvation." (Psalm 55:22; 68:19) Yes, knowing the truth really does bring refreshment. It draws us closer to Jehovah and helps us to appreciate that with his help it is possible to handle even the most difficult situations in life successfully.

Refreshed by the Kingdom Hope

[14] To find true refreshment for our souls, we must have a strong hope. It was hope that sustained Jesus. The Bible says: "For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2) The joyful hope that sustained Jesus was that of contributing to the sanctification of his Father's name by keeping integrity, as well as of proving worthy of reigning as King of God's Kingdom. Maintaining a clear vision of our hope, either as a coruler with Christ in heaven or as one of his subjects living on the Paradise earth, will also sustain us in God's service. Indeed, that hope is vital to finding refreshment for our souls.—Romans 12:12.

[15] Consider our life prospects without the Kingdom hope. A typical life span is only 70 or possibly 80 years. And those days go by so fast, as anyone growing older will tell you! Yes, the Bible truthfully says of life: "It must quickly pass by, and away we fly." (Psalm 90:10) Yet, we want our days to go on. We want to live. There is so much to do and enjoy.

[16] How vital, therefore, that we come in faith to "Christ Jesus, our hope"! (1 Timothy 1:1) As he said: "This is the will of my Father, that everyone that beholds the Son and exercises faith in him should have everlasting life." (John 6:40, 51) Do we believe that? To find refreshment for our souls, we absolutely must. We cannot do without it. Indeed, we must put on "as a helmet the hope of salvation." (1 Thessalonians 5:8; compare Hebrews 6:19.) That hope must guard our mind, our thinking. Otherwise, we will become so weighed down by burdens and troubles that we will give up and lose out on everlasting life. In order to enjoy refreshment for your soul, therefore, be sure to keep your Kingdom hope strong.

Refreshment From Doing God's Work

[17] But to obtain refreshment, more is required than simply coming to Jesus. He added: "Take my yoke upon you [or, "Get under my yoke with me"] and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in

13. To whom did Jesus teach us to turn for help, and what happens when we apply his counsel?
14. What sustained Jesus in his trials, and what is vital if we are to find refreshment for our souls?
15. What are our life prospects without the Kingdom hope?
16. To find refreshment for our souls, what do we need to do?
17. (a) To obtain refreshment, what is required, and why is this not too much for us? (b) What does accepting Christ's yoke involve?

heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light." (Matthew 11:29, 30, *New World Translation Reference Bible,* footnote) Taking on a yoke signifies work. But notice that Jesus does not ask us to take the yoke upon ourselves and do all the work alone. We are to get under the yoke with him. In this case, to accept the yoke that Christ offers involves making a dedication to God, symbolizing this by water baptism, and then assuming the responsibility of being a disciple of Christ. But how can such a yoke of discipleship bring refreshment?

[18] Accepting Christ's yoke brings refreshment because Jesus is mild-tempered and lowly in heart. Since he is not unreasonable, it is refreshing to work along with him under the same yoke. He takes into consideration our limitations and weaknesses. As he said, "My yoke is kindly." True, the yoke of discipleship involves work, the same preaching and teaching work that Jesus did and for which he trained his early followers. (Matthew 28: 19, 20; Acts 1:8) Yet, what a refreshing work it is to tell others about our loving God, his Son, and the Kingdom! How refreshing it is to tell people how they can live forever in Paradise! And when they respond to the life-giving Kingdom message and join us in serving Jehovah God, how great our joy becomes!—1 Timothy 4:16.

[19] In recent years, millions have come to Jehovah's organization who need help in accepting Christ's yoke, and this increases the work load of Kingdom proclaimers and those who shepherd them. For such spiritual shepherds, the counsel that the prophet Moses received from his father-in-law is noteworthy. He gave Moses this advice: "It is not good the way you are doing. You will surely wear out, both you and this people who are with you, because this business is too big a load for you. You are unable to do it by yourself." So he advised Moses to select other capable men to share the work of shepherding the people. Following this advice proved successful. (Exodus 18:17-27) Today, continual training will produce many capable men, "gifts in men," who can share in shepherding the flock so that congregation elders do not wear out.—Ephesians 4:8, 16.

[20] Although Christ exhorted his followers to exert themselves vigorously, neither he nor his Father requires that any of us do more than what is reasonable. Once, when some criticized Mary the sister of Lazarus for her efforts in Jesus' behalf, he rebuked them, saying: "Let her alone. . . . She did what she could." (Mark 14:6-8; Luke 13:24) And that is all that is expected of us—to do what we can. Such Christian activity is not a burden but a refreshment. Why? Because it brings true

18. (a) Why does accepting Christ's yoke bring refreshment? (b) How does the preaching work bring us joy and refreshment?
19. Why is the counsel of Moses' father-in-law noteworthy for congregation elders today?
20. What do Jesus Christ and his Father require of us?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ According to Romans 8:22, what has been the situation of humankind?
- ☐ In what ways does knowing the truth bring refreshment?
- ☐ Why is the Kingdom hope so refreshing?
- ☐ What is Jesus' yoke, and why is it kindly?
- ☐ Carrying what load will bring us refreshment?

satisfaction now and the sure hope of everlasting benefits in the future.

[21] True, Satan will see to it that we are persecuted, even as our yokefellow, Jesus Christ, was. (John 15:20; 2 Timothy 3:12) But remember that it is not Christ's light load that is burdensome. Rather, it is the opposition of Satan and his agents that often makes our work so difficult. Christ's load consists simply of living up to God's requirements, and these are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3) May we, then, continue to stay under Jesus Christ's yoke with him, exerting ourselves in the preaching and teaching work, even as he did. By doing so we will, as he promised, 'find refreshment for our souls.'

21. (a) What is Christ's light load, and what often makes the preaching work difficult? (b) What should be our firm resolve, and with what sure prospect?

'BUT I DO NOT LOVE JEHOVAH!'

BOB was just a young lad when his mother became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. For a number of years, he accompanied her to the Kingdom Hall and even in the preaching work, though he was never baptized. By the time he reached his late teens, however, he stopped associating with the Witnesses. Stumbling along from one bad situation to another, he made a wreck of his life. Though he still claims to believe many of the things he learned from the Bible, this has not been enough to make him want to come back to Jehovah's organization. Why does Bob feel this way?

Consider another example. David had been a full-time minister for a number of years. Occasionally, questions crossed his mind regarding certain Bible teachings. But he always resolved the problems by reasoning that as in solving a jigsaw puzzle, a person does not give up just because one or two pieces do not seem to fit in at first. He was content to wait on Jehovah for clarification. But somewhere along the line, David claimed that he was no longer able to satisfy himself in that way. Resigning from his service privileges, he soon left the truth. What caused the change in his thinking?

Surely, it is heartbreaking to see those whom we love give up in the race for life. Without a doubt, we want to do all we can to help them. (2 Corinthians 12:15; Galatians 5:7) But what really causes a person to fall away from the truth? What can be done to help such an individual to return to the race? And what should a person do if such tendencies begin to develop in him?

Heart, Conscience, and Faith

There is one noteworthy thing about those who have given up the truth. Most of them do not do so because they no longer believe it is the truth. Quite to the contrary, many of them say, "I know this is the truth, but . . . " or, "If there is any truth, I know this is it." Deep down in their hearts, many of them still believe

that what they have learned from the Bible is the truth. But somehow they have slacked their hand and lost their zeal. James said: "Faith without works is dead."—James 2:26.

True faith involves more than just possessing knowledge or believing that something is true. Rather than being just a process of the mind, faith involves the figurative heart, for the Bible tells us: "With the heart one exercises faith for righteousness." (Romans 10:10) Reasonably, then, the Bible points to the heart as the source of the problem when a person begins to deviate. As Paul warned: "Beware, brothers, for fear there should ever develop in any one of you a wicked heart lacking faith by drawing away from the living God."—Hebrews 3:12.

For evidence that the heart is deeply involved, we might listen to Diane, who had fallen away. When fellow Christians tried to help her, she frankly responded, "I can't come back to Jehovah. I don't love him!" She knew that the only thing that would help her to stay close to Jehovah God is love for him as a Person and as the One worthy of her devotion. In fact, it was this kind of love that motivated her to dedicate her life to Jehovah in the first place. But somehow she felt no such love anymore. Without it, she knew that she would only be going through the motions if she were to come back. But how does a person lose a love that was once so deeply felt?

Well, Paul mentioned "a wicked heart lacking faith." In some cases, such lack of faith results from allowing the heart to desire what Jehovah God forbids or to resist something he commands. The heart thus becomes divided and is no longer complete toward Jehovah. Then, sensing that one's course of action is not approved by God, the easy way to avoid further confrontation is to 'draw away from the living God.' (Compare Genesis 3:8-10.) Instead of repenting, the "wicked heart" moves one to blot out Jehovah and his purpose from one's life. The faithless person thus gives up the truth.

In other cases, rather than suffering the pangs of conscience for a certain course, an individual lets his heart treacherously move him to seek intellectual escape through doubt, faultfinding, or even apostasy. If he can convince himself that the whole framework of his faith is wrong, he no longer feels the obligation to live within its bounds. Such individuals thrust aside a good conscience and 'experience shipwreck concerning their faith.' —1 Timothy 1:19.

Of course, a person may give up the truth for some other reason. But whatever it is, it almost invariably involves the heart. For this reason, timely indeed is the counsel: "More than all else that is to be guarded, safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life."—Proverbs 4:23.

Recovery Is Possible

Admitting that our own wrong inclinations were at the root of our loss of faith takes courage. But doing so is the first step toward working our way back to a solid relationship with Jehovah. The experience of Steve, a pioneer in England, well illustrates this point.

Although Steve never did fall out of the truth, at one point he began to feel an emptiness and a lack of conviction. When he preached to others, his words sounded hollow in his own ears. When Steve was among his spiritual brothers and sisters, he felt out of place, as though he was not one of them.

Happily for Steve, he recognized that the problem rested with him. "I did not make the mistake of isolating myself in order to think things out, as if there were some source of inspiration within the imperfect flesh that would provide the right

answers," recalls Steve. (Compare Romans 7:18.) Rather, he realized that he must search his heart and root out the deceptive desires leading him away from the truth. Starting from the very foundation, he worked to reaffirm his love for God and faith in His Word. Today, Steve is happily serving as a missionary.

How Others Can Help

Not everyone who has lost or is losing his grip on the truth sees things as clearly as Steve did. In fact, often it is this loss of clear spiritual vision that leads to a final downfall. This is where fellow Christians can lend a helping hand. (Romans 15:1; Galatians 6:1) But how can this best be done?

Obviously, it is not enough to invite or encourage such a person to return. Obstacles need to be identified and removed. Efforts must be made to appeal to the heart of the weakened or inactive individual. Frank, but kind, heart-to-heart discussions may help the person. Using scriptures such as 1 Timothy 1:19, Hebrews 3:12, and Jeremiah 17:9, 10 may help him to search deep down in his heart and see what is causing him to 'draw away from the living God.'

Once the causes are identified, efforts must be directed toward dealing with them. A diseased physical heart requires care and perhaps painful surgery if the patient is to survive. It is similar with an ailing figurative heart. Wrong desires, tendencies toward independence, or other factors that are causing the heart to be wayward must be removed if it is to become responsive once again. Active Christians might well pray with the inactive person, even studying the Bible with him if the elders consider this advisable. Only in such ways can the heart be revived and the individual come to love Jehovah once again.—Proverbs 2:1-5.

This was true in the case of Diane. Discussions with mature Christians helped her to recognize what she needed to do in order to rekindle her love for Jehovah. Realizing that she had to come to know Jehovah intimately once again, Diane accepted the help offered. After studying the Bible for about a year, she and her husband again became active praisers of Jehovah.

Since love involves action, often it is doing what Jehovah says and experiencing his loving help that prove most effective. Yes, activity helps a person to regain the love that once motivated his heart. (Psalm 34:8) This may start with taking active steps to combat the wrong desires or correct the improper tendencies of the heart. Every victory in this battle is a step closer to bringing the heart back to Jehovah. (Proverbs 23:26; 1 Peter 2:1-3) As the heart is won over, the desire grows to share what is in it with others. Hence, as soon as formerly inactive Kingdom publishers qualify, they should be helped to have a share in the preaching work, for "with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation." —Romans 10:10.

For any who feel that they do not love Jehovah any longer, the road back to a godly life may be a long and difficult one. Yet, the spiritual recoveries of Steve and of Diane are evidence that a change of heart can occur. Yes, restoration is possible through the working of Jehovah's spirit, the application of his Word, and renewed cooperation with his organization. It is our sincere hope and prayer that such persons can be helped to rejoice once again in Jehovah's worship and sacred service as those who wholeheartedly love Jehovah. —Mark 12:30; 1 Corinthians 13:8; 3 John 1-4.

GEMS
From Matthew's Gospel

JEHOVAH GOD inspired the former tax collector Matthew to pen a thrilling account of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Subscriptions in a number of manuscripts later than the tenth century say that this Gospel was written about the eighth year after Jesus' ascension (c. 41 C.E.). This does not conflict with the internal evidence, since the account ends with Jesus' commissioning of disciple makers in 33 C.E. and says nothing about Jerusalem's destruction at Roman hands in 70 C.E.

In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Ecclesiastical History), the fourth-century historian Eusebius quotes Papias and Irenaeus of the second century and Origen of the third, all of whom ascribe this Gospel to Matthew and say that he wrote it in Hebrew. Was this really Aramaic? Not according to documents mentioned by George Howard, professor of religion at the University of Georgia. He wrote: "This supposition was due primarily to the belief that Hebrew in the days of Jesus was no longer in use in Palestine but had been replaced by Aramaic. The subsequent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, many of which are Hebrew compositions, as well as of other Hebrew documents from Palestine from the general time period of Jesus, now show Hebrew to have been alive and well in the first century." Evidently, Matthew wrote his Gospel to benefit Hebrew Christians but may also have translated it into common Greek.

We urge you to read Matthew's Gospel. As we look at a few of the gems it contains, note background material that clarifies the account.

Birth and Early Ministry

Matthew's Gospel opens with the genealogy and birth of Jesus. When Mary was found pregnant, her fiancé, Joseph, "intended to divorce her secretly." (1:19) But how could he do so, since they were only engaged? Well, to the Jews a betrothed woman had the same obligations as married women. If she had sexual relations with someone, she could be stoned as though an adulteress. (Deuteronomy 22:23-29) Because of the binding nature of engagement, therefore, Joseph planned to divorce Mary, although no ceremony had united them in wedlock.

Early chapters of Matthew's Gospel contain Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In it, Christ warned that one would be accountable to "the Supreme Court" for addressing a brother with "an unspeakable word of contempt." (5:22) Such speech amounted to calling one's brother an empty-headed numskull.

But what was "the Supreme Court"? It was Jerusalem's 71-member Sanhedrin. What background was needed to qualify for membership in it? Says McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia:* "The applicant had to be morally and physically blameless. He had to be middle-aged, tall, good-looking, wealthy, learned . . . He was required to know several languages . . . Very old persons, proselytes, eunuchs, and Nethinim were ineligible because of their idiosyncrasies; nor could such candidates be elected as had no children, because they could not sympathize with domestic affairs . . . ; nor those who could not prove that they were the legitimate offspring of a priest, Levite, or Israelite. . . . A candidate for the Great Sanhedrim was required, first of all, to have been a judge in his native town; to have transferred from there to the Small Sanhedrim . . . , thence again to have been advanced to the second Small Sanhedrim . . . be-

fore he could be received as member of the seventy-one."

So Jesus meant that "whoever addresses his brother with an unspeakable word of contempt" bears guilt comparable to that of one convicted and sentenced to death by the Jewish Supreme Court. What a warning not to malign our brothers! Let us bridle our tongue so that we never merit condemnation in the Highest Court, before Jehovah, "the Judge of all the earth." —Genesis 18:25; James 3:2-12.

Jesus an Effective Teacher

This Gospel also portrays Jesus as a teacher able to answer questions skillfully. For example, in response to a query, he explained why his disciples did not fast. (9:14-17) They had no reason to fast while he was alive. But as he foretold, they fasted and mourned when he died because they did not know why his death was allowed. After receiving the holy spirit at Pentecost, however, they were enlightened and no longer fasted in sorrow.

Still dealing with the same subject, Jesus added that nobody patches an old garment with unshrunk cloth because its strength makes a tear worse. He

also said that new wine is not put into old wineskins. A wineskin, or skin bottle, was a tanned animal hide with all but perhaps a leg opening sewed up. Fermenting new wine generates carbon dioxide that exerts enough pressure to burst old, dry wineskins. Comparably, the truth Christ taught was too powerful for old, inflexible Judaism. Moreover, he was not trying to patch up or perpetuate any worn-out religious system with its fasting customs and other rites. Rather, God used Jesus to institute a new system of worship. Surely, then, we should do nothing to support interfaith movements or perpetuate false religion.

Heed Counsel From God's Son

According to Matthew's account of the transfiguration, God called Jesus His approved Son and said that we should listen to him. (17:5) So we ought to heed all of Christ's counsel, such as his warning

that anyone stumbling a person putting faith in him would be better off sunk in the sea with a millstone hung around his neck. (18:6) What kind of stone was this? Not a small one, for Jesus meant an upper millstone four to five feet in diameter. Turning it on a large lower stone called for an animal's strength. No one could survive in the sea with such a great weight around his neck. In effect, then, Jesus was counseling us to avoid the guilt of stumbling any of his followers. With similar intent, the apostle Paul wrote: "It is well not to eat flesh or to drink wine or do anything over which your brother stumbles." —Romans 14:21.

God's Son gave indirect counsel when he pronounced woe on the scribes and the Pharisees and said that they resembled whitewashed graves. (23:27, 28) It was customary to whitewash graves and tombs so that people would not accidentally touch them and become unclean. By alluding to this practice, Jesus showed that the scribes and the Pharisees appeared righteous outwardly but were "full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." Heeding this implied counsel will cause us to shun deviousness and act "out of faith without hypocrisy." —1 Timothy 1:5; Proverbs 3:32; 2 Timothy 1:5.

Our Exemplar an Integrity Keeper

After recording Jesus' prophecy about 'the sign of his presence,' Matthew tells of Christ's betrayal, arrest, trial, death, and resurrection. On the stake, Jesus refused wine mixed with gall, a substance having a narcotic effect. (27:34) Women customarily gave such wine to criminals to deaden the pain of impalement. Mark 15:23 says that the wine was "drugged with myrrh," which would improve the flavor. Apparently, both gall and myrrh were in the wine Christ refused. As he reached the climax of his earthly course, he did not want to be drugged or stupefied. Jesus desired to be in full command of his senses in order to be faithful to death. Like our Exemplar, may we always be concerned about keeping our integrity to Jehovah God.—Psalm 26:1, 11.

Meeting the challenge of the oldest territory on earth

"THE kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." To the 370 proclaimers of the "good news" in the modern State of Israel, declaring that message has special import. Why? Because it was here that the Kingdom message was first declared by Jesus Christ some 2,000 years ago. (Matthew 4:17; 24:14) That makes Israel the oldest territory on earth in which the good news is being preached.

Right from the start, however, this has been a challenging territory. Although many showed interest in Jesus' message, few went further than that. (John 6:2, 66) Today, the challenge lies in the diversity in religion, culture, and political views.

On one hand, there are the 2.2 million Arabs. Among them are nominal Christians, practicing or nonpracticing Muslims, members of the Druze faith, and professed atheists. They are also aligned in different ways politically, some favoring the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Above: Garden Tomb, Jerusalem
Opposite: Market and street scenes in Israel
Bottom: Branch office in Tel Aviv

On the other hand, there are the 3.5 million Jewish Israelis, also divided in many ways. Some have immigrated from Morocco, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria. Others have come from Europe and Russia. Still others are from India, the Americas, Ethiopia, South Africa, and elsewhere. They live in communities having their own culture and traditions as well as their unique interpretation of Judaism and how to practice it.

There is, for example, a chief rabbi for the Ashkenazi (European) Jews and one for the Sephardic (Middle Eastern) Jews. While the majority display keen interest in political issues, there are deeply religious Jews who do not even recognize the existence of the State of Israel and refuse to pay taxes. Then there are the Holocaust survivors, many of whom are still tormented by their past ordeal, each with his own heartrending experience to tell. Increasingly, too, more are professing to be atheists, holding to a wide range of personal philosophies. The single thread holding the Jewish population together is its survival as a people and political entity.

Meeting the Challenge

After a break of over 1,800 years, the Kingdom-preaching work was resumed here on a small scale in 1913. At that time, a young man interested in the Bible started to sow Kingdom seed in Ramallah, about ten miles north of Jerusalem. From there the good news spread to the Arabic residents of Beit-Jala and Haifa. Shortly after World War II, two Witness sisters of Jewish background got the work restarted in the Tel Aviv/Jaffa area. Today, there are six congregations and two groups of Jehovah's Witnesses serving in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Lod, and in the Beer-Sheba area.

As was the case 19 centuries ago, the house-to-house ministry is still the most effective way of finding those interested in the good news. (Luke 8:1; compare Acts 5:42.) In fact, compared to some other lands, it is a pleasure to witness in this manner here. Generally, the people are curious about our message and invite the Kingdom publishers in for a discussion. This curiosity often leads to the placement of our magazines and other Bible literature. Frequently, such publications are passed on from neighbor to neighbor,

resulting in some individuals' learning Bible truth.

This same curiosity, however, often becomes a threat to the fragile seed of truth in the hearts of new ones. (Matthew 13: 20, 21) Neighbors, friends, and especially religious leaders do their utmost to pressure, ridicule, intimidate, and in some cases physically abuse those who show interest in the Kingdom message. As a result, some have lost employment, while others have been completely cut off by friends and family. Those who stand firm and become Jehovah's Witnesses must endure the fires of opposition.—Compare John 9:22.

Opposition also comes in other ways. Witnesses of Jewish background have been attacked by a mob. The branch office and Kingdom Hall in Tel Aviv and the Kingdom Hall in Haifa have been targets of arsonists. Now there is great pressure on both Arabic and Jewish Witnesses to take sides in the political dispute over the establishment of a Palestinian state. Maintaining a neutral position in such matters, the brothers tactfully explain that no human agency is able to solve the problems of ailing mankind. Rather, in imitation of their Leader, Jesus Christ, the Witnesses point to God's Kingdom as the only solution.—John 17:16; 18:36.

Kingdom Fruitage Produced

Despite the challenges in this oldest witnessing territory, those "hearing the word and getting the sense of it" do bring forth Kingdom fruitage in this field. (Matthew 13:23) "There are people who are thirsty for the truth, lovers of righteousness who are literally searching for it," observed an experienced full-time minister. "They are not influenced by opinions or pressures from others. When the opportunity to learn the truth strikes, they quickly seize it." Many experiences bear out this point.

Brought up in a convent in Greece, Benvenida was deeply impressed with what the Bible says about "the form of worship that is clean and undefiled," namely, "to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself without spot from the world." (James 1:27) As a young Jewish girl, she experienced nothing but "catastrophe after catastrophe," as she put it. She endured the hardship of Nazi occupation and a civil war, in which she lost her husband. But her hope of finding honest and unhypocritical people never diminished.

After immigrating to Israel in 1949, Benvenida pursued a career as a midwife until her retirement in 1974. "During all that time," she said, "I kept asking myself: 'Where are those good and honest people that the Bible describes? Where is there justice in this world?' " She took up Judaism, attending a synagogue and keeping the Sabbath and holidays. But the gossiping and bickering among the members of her local congregation made her hunger all the more for "the form of worship that is clean and undefiled."

Finally, in 1985, on one of Benvenida's annual visits to a health spa in Greece, a Witness woman receiving treatment there struck up a conversation with her. A long discussion ensued. That same night, Ben-

In Our Next Issue

- **Are You Willing to Listen to God?**
- **Grand Human Prospects in a Paradise of Pleasantness**
- **From the Road to Death to the Road to Life**

venida attended her first meeting at the local Kingdom Hall and was deeply impressed by the warmth and sincerity of the brothers and sisters.

Benvenida continued her study when she returned to Israel, and about a year and a half later, she was baptized in symbol of her dedication to the God of truth, Jehovah. "Finally," she said, "after all these years and at the age of 70, I found the modest and humble people the Bible speaks about, those who treat me like a person. Now, each day that I live is a day of joy and purpose!"

Moshe was another truth seeker just waiting to 'hear the fine shepherd's voice.' (Compare John 10:14-16.) Though Moshe was always fond of the Scriptures, it was from a copy of the "New Testament" his brother was about to discard that he learned about Jesus Christ, and he was deeply impressed. Sometime later, Moshe joined a workmate in her Bible study with a Witness and attended a discourse given by a visiting speaker. "This is what I always wanted to hear!" he exclaimed after that first meeting.

After an initial setback, Moshe's progress was rapid. Within six months, he was baptized. However, his progress brought on opposition from his family, especially his wife. This came to a head when he, as the eldest son in the family, refused to take part in the ceremonial prayers at his father's funeral. Additionally, friends and relatives told his wife that she had better 'do something quick' before he signed over everything to the congregation. "I allayed her fears by offering to put the apartment in her name," Moshe commented. And by properly scheduling his time, he was able to maintain a happy balance between his family and congregational responsibilities.

Not all relatives oppose the truth, however. Nehai shared what she had learned from the Bible with her husband, Hanna, who was then very active in politics. Soon, both of them came to realize that God's Kingdom is the only hope for oppressed humankind. So they became dedicated servants of Jehovah and started witnessing among the Arabic families in Haifa and the surrounding villages. Particularly did they witness among their own extended family, some 252 people in all.

Has this been a challenge? Yes, for besides having to drive an hour and a half each way to the Arabic villages to make the calls, much patience and endurance were needed. "Sometimes different ones tell you that they don't want to hear anymore. When that happens, you will have to stop talking. Later, perhaps you can tactfully ease into the subject again. It is like being kicked out the front door and climbing back in through the window," Hanna remarked. All of this has paid off. Thus far, 24 of his 36 close relatives have expressed serious interest in the Scriptures, and 13 of them are studying the Bible with Hanna or other Witnesses. To date, five of his close relatives as well as his own children have dedicated their lives to Jehovah, and three others are progressing toward that point.

New Peaks in the Oldest Territory

Heartwarming experiences like these are on the increase here in Israel, and the prospects for growth are most encouraging. In 1988 the number of Kingdom proclaimers reached a peak of 370. The average number of Bible studies conducted each month in the homes of interested people has jumped from 89 in 1979 to 301 in 1988—a 240-percent increase!

All of this brings great joy to Jehovah's Witnesses in this ancient land. We look forward to even greater blessings from our God, Jehovah, as we press on with the disciple-making work in the oldest territory on earth.

Questions From Readers

■ **Is it appropriate for a Christian to buy lottery tickets as mere entertainment if the proceeds go to a charity?**

The Bible certainly does not discourage fitting entertainment, for Jehovah is "the happy God." (1 Timothy 1:11) His people can enjoy music, modest dancing, moderate eating or drinking, and balanced sports and games. (Psalm 150:4; Ecclesiastes 2:24) However, gambling clearly conflicts with God's wise counsel, and this is true of sharing in lotteries.

Exactly what is a lottery? It involves buying tickets to have a chance to win prizes. Winners are determined by a drawing or some random way of choosing a number.* Often there is one huge prize, perhaps amounting to millions of dollars, pesos, or pounds. The appeal of such an enormous prize is so great that lotteries have become "the most widespread form of gambling." (*The World Book Encyclopedia*) Hundreds of millions of people gamble by means of lotteries.

Some people have reasoned that being involved in a lottery is not wrong or bad because the cost of a ticket (chance) may be small, because those participating do so willingly, and because some of the proceeds may be used for a charitable purpose, such as helping the poor. How valid is such reasoning?

While some claim that buying a lottery ticket is simple, low-cost entertainment, there is no denying the greed factor. People buy lottery tickets hoping to win a lot of money. This certainly runs in the face of divine counsel against greediness, which can be such a serious vice that it can prevent a person from 'inheriting God's kingdom.' Hence, if a Christian manifested persistent greed by gambling, he could be excluded from the congregation. (1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10) The Bible says: "An inheritance is being got by greed at first, but its own future will not be blessed." (Proverbs 20:21) If a Christian felt any impulse to 'take a chance' in a lottery, he should think seriously about the greed on which the lottery is based. Ephesians 5:3 says that 'greediness should not even be mentioned among us,' much less given in to by a Christian.

The largest portion of lottery players are usually found in poor communities. So even if the cost of a ticket is small, funds are being diverted that ought to go toward genuine family needs —more food, adequate clothing, improved medical care. A person who claims to be a Christian but neglects such family needs "is worse than a person without faith."—1 Timothy 5:8.

Even if the cost of a lottery ticket would not significantly harm someone's personal or family finances, that does not mean that others are not harmed. Why so? Because almost anyone buying a lottery ticket would like to win. From where would his prize money come? If his ticket cost ten pesos and the prize is a million pesos, that means that he takes the ticket money from a hundred thousand other people. Does that harmonize with God's counsel against coveting others' valuables? (Deuteronomy 5:21) In fact, his prize will involve money taken from many more people, for far more than a hundred thousand tickets will have to be sold. A goodly amount of ticket money must go for administrative costs, as well as some to the charitable purpose that is trumpeted as the rationale for the lottery. So even if a person can afford the ten pesos for his own ticket, what about vast numbers of others? Moreover, his winning will probably be publicized, moving many to begin playing the lottery or buying more tickets, even if they cannot afford this.

There is also no denying that bound up with the lottery is the dream of winning money without working for it. Yes, the lottery encourages laziness or appeals to it. The Bible, though, urges God's people to be thrifty, industrious, and hardworking. Rather than promote a 'get something for nothing' spirit, it advises: "If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat."—2 Thessalonians 3:10; Proverbs 13:4; 20:4; 21:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12.

That others may share in a lottery of their own volition and that it is legal does not justify involvement in it by Christians. Some governments legalize other forms of gambling, as well as prostitution and polygamy. Though such things may be legal and many people are willingly involved in them, this does not mean that such activities are proper in God's sight. Christians, rather, strive to reflect David's view: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths. Make me walk in your truth and teach me, for you are my God of salvation."—Psalm 25:4, 5.

If a Christian genuinely wants to help the poor, handicapped, or elderly, he certainly can do so directly or in a way that does not involve gambling.

* Though widely known as a lottery, this type of gambling may also be called a pool, sweepstakes, raffle, or some local name.

Insight on the News

Catholics and Baptism

An increasing number of adults are being baptized by the Roman Catholic Church in France, reports *Le Monde,* a French newspaper. In fact, the paper claims that "the figures have doubled over the past four years." Prebaptism classes are being taken by over 4,000 French adults seeking to become baptized Catholics. Two thirds are women between the ages of 20 and 40. One quarter are of non-French origin.

Preparation for adult baptism, however, can last two or three years. Priest Guy Cordonnier, responsible for such prebaptism classes in the Versailles area, stated: "To get baptized, it is not enough to say that one believes in God. It is necessary to learn how to live within a community."

Adult baptism is, of course, nothing new. Jesus himself was baptized at the age of 30 years. That more than simply a belief in God is required for baptism is likewise not new. Jesus' command to his followers was to "make disciples . . . , baptizing them" and "teaching them" to observe his commands.—Matthew 28:19, 20.

However, since the Catholic Church has for centuries practiced infant baptism, the church's stance on the baptizing of adults is a paradox. Church authorities say it takes two or more years to prepare an *adult* for baptism, yet they maintain that *infant* baptism is proper. They claim that baptism cleanses infants of inherited sin, but the apostle John wrote: "The blood of Jesus . . . cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) Since babies are incapable of exercising faith in God and in Christ's shed blood, why baptize them?

Words Never Heard

Almost half of the 3,800 wives surveyed by a Japanese insurance company "have not heard the words 'I love you' from their husbands in a few years," reports *The Daily Yomiuri.* The percentage of wives not hearing these words increases with age, and of those in their 50's, an amazing 82 percent said they never hear these words from their husbands. Even among the wives in their 20's, only 10 percent hear their husbands utter these words every day.

In wise King Solomon's love story involving a shepherd boy and a beautiful country girl from the ancient city of Shunem, it was through "expressions of endearment" that the boy won the girl's heart. (Song of Solomon 1:2) Once husbands have won the hearts of their wives, is it still necessary to express their affection? Yes! The Bible exhorts: "Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it."—Ephesians 5:25.

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus repeatedly expressed his love for his disciples. (John 13:34; 14:19-21; 15:9, 10, 12) A husband must consider his wife's needing to be assured of his love. Husbands must also remember that Christ 'delivered himself up for the congregation.' Thus, he expressed love both by words and by actions. Clearly, husbands do well to imitate Christ's example.

What does the Bible say about ABORTIONS?

That is what a couple in Argentina asked a woman visiting them, since they knew she was well-acquainted with the Bible. The couple wanted to know if God considered an abortion to be proper. The wife had been pregnant for two months and was planning to have an abortion, even though her husband was not in agreement.

The woman visiting the couple took out a copy of the book *Reasoning From the Scriptures* and turned to page 25. She read the definition of abortion and then had the couple read the scriptures listed in the publication, showing how God views an unborn child. Seven months later the baby was born. In the meantime, the proud parents had become Bible students.