

The **Watchtower**
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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HOW YOU
CAN FIND
JOY

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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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You can find joy in a depressing world!

MARIE has a bright, cheerful disposition. It is hard to believe that just a few years ago, this 32-year-old woman described herself as being dead inside. Marie had been a victim of serious depression. "It was like a big dark cloud that gradually lifted," she explains. Yes, happily she recovered and regained her joy.

Each year a hundred million persons worldwide are crippled with severe depression! This disorder is not a mere passing blue mood that most of us experience from time to time. Severe depression involves an unrelenting gloominess. The depressed person loses interest in life, finds no pleasure in anything, and has feelings of general hopelessness and worthlessness. In 1983 the World Health Organization stated: "There is at present little doubt that depressive disorders occur in all parts of the world."

Careful Bible students are not surprised at this report. The Bible identifies our time as "the last days," characterized by "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3: 1-5) Social structures that in the past lent support in times of emotional crisis have deteriorated. In the article "The Age of



Melancholy?", Dr. Gerald Klerman attributes the current increase of depression to this change. He explains: "The three most common social support systems have been the family, the church, and the immediate neighborhood. . . . It is a characteristic of the present time that all three of those social support systems are in various degrees of disarray."

It was the disruption of Marie's family that led to her despair. "When my stepmother left without a word, I felt betrayed and alone. I was 12 years old, and suddenly my world seemed upside down," recalls Marie. Shortly afterward she had to leave home because her father made immoral advances toward her, and she admits: "I

felt abnormal, and I lost all confidence in myself." Thus began her plunge into serious depression.

One day when Marie was extremely depressed, two of Jehovah's Witnesses called at her home. Immediately she showed great interest in their cheerful Bible message. "Previously, I saw just the utter uselessness of life and so many ugly things, but now I became convinced that I could live in a new world where God would correct all these injustices. With God's help I could qualify for such a blessing; thus, my life took on real meaning." As she attended the meetings of the Witnesses, she found genuine love and emotional support. (John 13:34, 35) The skillful counseling of the congregation elders also helped her begin to change her negative thinking. (James 5:14) Her depression began to subside. Multitudes of other people who, like Marie, are depressed by world conditions have found "the joy of Jehovah" by coming to an accurate knowledge of Bible truth.—Nehemiah 8:10; 1 Timothy 2:4.

Yet, did Marie's depression instantly clear up? Should we assume that Christians are immune to depression? To answer these questions, we must take more than a superficial look at this disorder and its complex causes. Knowing the real roots of depression can make you more successful in dealing with it in yourself or in helping someone afflicted with it.

The Roots of Severe Depression

In some cases depression has physiological causes, such as disease, nutritional deficiencies, and hormonal problems. It may also be a reaction to some toxins, pollutants, medications, and allergens.* However, the Bible reveals that one's own "disquieting thoughts" also may be a cause.—Psalm 94:19.

* See "Depression: All in One's Head?" in the October 22, 1987, issue of *Awake!*

Most people who become depressed, like Marie, have encountered a number of painfully unpleasant experiences or stressful situations. Many feel like the psalmist: "My soul has had enough of calamities . . . They have closed in upon me all at one time. You [Jehovah] have put far away from me friend and companion; my acquaintances are a dark place." (Psalm 88: 3, 17, 18) So like the psalmist, they feel overwhelmed by problems or losses and view their life in general as hopeless. They may feel as if they were all alone in a dark place and that even God has cast them off.

Why do they reach such a discouraging conclusion, in effect developing a stricken spirit? It is not just because of their external problems; it is also due to painful feelings or misgivings about themselves. They feel inadequate to deal with the problem or loss. "Because of the pain of the heart there is a stricken spirit," explains Proverbs 15:13. Such pain of heart would include feeling that one is a failure or that others think so. Even the first-century Christian Epaphroditus, after recovering from a serious illness during a mission arranged by his home congregation, became "depressed because [the congregation] heard he had fallen sick."—Philippians 2:25-30.

Since 'a stricken spirit makes the bones dry,' or undermines one's very being, feelings of low self-esteem are often at the root of serious depression. (Proverbs 17: 22) Pain of heart might also be brought on by too great a concern about how others view us, perfectionism, unresolved anger, resentment, unsettled conflicts with others, or guilt (real or exaggerated).

So the causes of serious depression are many. Yet, Marie found real joy after becoming a Christian. "I then had hope," she said. But for some time she still had to endure depression. How can such persons eventually overcome it?

Winning the battle against depression

“THE most overwhelming thing that I had to deal with,” confessed Lola, “was the guilt of feeling hopeless since, as one of Jehovah’s servants, I thought I should not feel that way.” This common misunderstanding is often the first foe a depressed Christian must defeat. Lola added: “Once I quit mentally beating myself for feeling the way I did and concentrated on getting well, I could better cope with the depression.” Yes, depression in itself is no reason for you to think that you have failed God.

As mentioned in the previous article, the cause of depression may be physiological. In 1915, long before the recent research linking many physical ills with depression, *The Watch Tower* stated: “This heaviness of spirit, or feeling of loneliness and depression, is natural at times to all mankind . . . [It is] accentuated to some extent by the condition of physical health.” Thus, if a depressed mood lingers, a checkup by a doctor may be helpful. If the situation is extreme, one may want to have the disorder treated by a professional who specializes in depression.*

* See “Attacking Major Depression—Professional Treatments” in the October 22, 1981, issue of *Awake!*

But even when the cause is not physical, it is unrealistic to expect that one of God’s servants will never be sad or discouraged. Just consider how faithful Hannah became ‘bitter of soul and wept greatly.’ (1 Samuel 1:7, 10) Nehemiah also ‘wept and mourned for days’ and had “gloominess of heart.” (Nehemiah 1:4; 2:2) Job despised his life and felt that God had abandoned him. (Job 10:1; 29:2, 4, 5) King David said that his spirit fainted away within him and that his heart became numbed. (Psalm 143:4) And the apostle Paul spoke of having “fears within” and being “laid low” or “thrown down” emotionally.—2 Corinthians 4:9; 7:5, 6.

Though all of these were faithful servants of God, various distresses, apprehensions, or bitter disappointments had for a time caused them sorrow. Yet, God had not abandoned them or taken away his holy spirit. Their depressed mood was not due to spiritual failure. At a time when David was afflicted, he pleaded in prayer: “Make the soul of your servant rejoice.” God comforted David during this ‘day of distress’ and helped him, in time, to rejoice. (Psalm 86:1, 4, 7) Jehovah will likewise help his servants now.

Since depression is not in itself proof of either spiritual failure or mental weakness, a Christian plagued with it should not keep silent because of embarrassment. Rather, he should take one of the most important steps in fighting this disorder. What is that?

Pour Out Your Feelings

He should talk to someone about it. Proverbs 12:25 states: “Anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down, but the good word is what makes it rejoice.” No other human can know the intensity of the anxious care in your heart unless you open up and talk about it. By confiding in an empathetic

person who can help, you will likely learn that others have had similar feelings and problems. Also, putting feelings into words is a healing process, for it relieves the heart to give expression to the painful experience rather than bottle it up. Therefore, depressed souls should confide in a marriage mate, a parent, or a compassionate and spiritually qualified friend.—Galatians 6:1.

Part of Marie's problem (mentioned in the previous article) was that she bottled up the troubling emotions that led to her depression. "Over the years, I had put up such a pretense," she said. "Others would never dream that I had such trouble dealing with these feelings of worthlessness." But Marie opened up to an elder in the congregation. The elder through discerning questions 'drew up' from her heart the anxiety she carried and helped her to understand herself better. (Proverbs 20:5) His good words from the Scriptures gave her reassurance. "For the first time, I began to get help to deal with certain feelings that contributed to my depression," explained Marie.

So talking to an understanding elder may provide spiritually refreshing "water" to one whose "soul is like an exhausted land." (Isaiah 32:1, 2; Psalm 143:6) A discerning spiritual counselor may even help you to see how you can take practical steps to deal with what you might have considered to be a hopeless situation. (Proverbs 24:6) But more is needed than just confiding in another.

Recognize Your Real Value

Feelings of worthlessness are a big factor in depression. Perhaps because of an unhappy childhood, some Christians have low self-esteem. But even though physical, emotional, or sexual abuse in the past has left emotional scars, this does not change a person's worth. Thus, you must strive to

have a balanced view of your true value as a person. "I would say to every one of you," urged the apostle Paul, "not to estimate himself above his real value, but to make a sober rating of himself." (Romans 12:3, *Charles B. Williams*) While guarding against arrogance, you should try not to go to the other extreme. Those who have a relationship with God are precious, desirable to him, for he selects humans to become his "special property." What an outstanding privilege!—Malachi 3:17; Haggai 2:7.

Also, what an honor to be "God's fellow workers" by engaging in the Christian work of disciple making. (1 Corinthians 3:9; Matthew 28:19, 20) Many depressed Christians have found that this work builds self-worth. "Even after becoming a Christian, I felt very inadequate," admitted Marie. Still, she persisted in the preaching work, and one day she met a brain-damaged young woman who wanted to be taught the Bible. "She needed someone who would be patient with her, since she was a slow learner," said Marie. "Because she took so much of my attention, I forgot about myself and my inadequacies. She needed my help, and I realized that I could give it to her in Jehovah's strength. Seeing her get baptized encouraged me beyond words. My self-esteem grew, and the serious depression vanished for good." How true that "the one freely watering others will himself also be freely watered"! —Proverbs 11:25.

Still, many depressed persons respond as did a severely depressed Christian woman, who admitted: "Though I work very hard to clean and cook and to be hospitable, I turn around and pick myself to pieces about every little fault." Such unreasonable fault-finding greatly undermines self-esteem. Remember that our God is understanding and does "not for all time keep finding fault." (Psalm 103:8-10, 14) If Jehovah, who

has a higher sense of right than we have, does not badger us about every little fault and is willing to show such forbearance, should we not endeavor to imitate him in our dealings with ourselves?

All of us have flaws and weaknesses. Yet, we have strengths as well. The apostle Paul did not expect excellence of himself in all his endeavors. "Even if I am unskilled in speech, I certainly am not in knowledge," he stated. Paul did not feel inferior simply because he may not have excelled as a public speaker. (2 Corinthians 11:6) Likewise, depressed ones should focus on the things that they do well.

"Wisdom is with the modest ones," or with those who recognize and accept their limitations. (Proverbs 11:2) Each of us is a unique soul with differing circumstances, physical stamina, and abilities. As you serve Jehovah whole-souled, doing what you can, he is pleased. (Mark 12:30-33) God is not one who is never satisfied with the efforts of his devoted worshipers. Leora, a Christian who successfully fought her depression, said: "I do not do as well as everybody else in some things, such as presentations in the field ministry. But I am trying. What I do is *my* best."

Handling Mistakes and Misunderstandings

What, though, if you make a serious mistake? Perhaps you feel like King David, who 'walked about sad all day long' because of his errors, or sin. But this very feeling may be evidence that you have not gone too far and committed an unforgivable sin! (Psalm 38:3-6, 8) Feelings of guilt may show that one who has sinned has an honest heart and a good conscience. So how can the guilt be handled? Well, have you prayed for God's forgiveness and taken steps to right the wrong? (2 Corinthi-

ans 7:9-11) If so, have faith in the mercy of the One who forgives in a large way, while determining not to repeat the sin. (Isaiah 55:7) If you have been disciplined, do not 'give out when you are corrected, for whom Jehovah loves he disciplines.' (Hebrews 12:5, 6) Such correction has the purpose of helping to reestablish a straying sheep. It does not detract from his value as a person.

Even if our own heart condemns us, we need not conclude that Jehovah has condemned us. "We shall assure our hearts before him as regards whatever our hearts may condemn us in, because God is greater





than our hearts and knows all things.” (1 John 3:19, 20) Jehovah sees more than our sins and mistakes. He knows of extenuating circumstances, our whole life course, our motives and intentions. The greatness of his knowledge enables him to hear with sympathy our earnest prayers for forgiveness, as he heard David’s.

Misunderstandings with others and being overly concerned about having their approval also contribute to having a lack of self-worth, perhaps even to a feeling of being rejected. Because of imperfection, a fellow Christian may speak to you in a way that seems insensitive or unkind. Still, many misunderstandings can be cleared up by telling the person how you were affected by the remark. (Compare Matthew 5:23, 24.) Also, Solomon advised: “Do not give your heart to all the words that people may speak.” Why? “For your own heart well knows even many times that you, even you, have called down evil upon others.” (Ecclesiastes 7:21, 22) Do not unreal-

istically expect perfection of yourself or of your relationships with other imperfect humans. Be quick to forgive and put up with others.—Colossians 3:13.

Furthermore, your true value is not measured primarily by whether you are loved by others or not. Christ was “held . . . as of no account,” and he was ‘valued from [the] standpoint of others’ at very little. (Isaiah 53:3; Zechariah 11:13) Did this change his real worth or the way God valued him? No, for even if we were perfect, like Jesus, we could not please everyone.

Power to Endure

At times, serious depression may linger despite our efforts to overcome it. The emotional pain may even cause some Christians to feel as did Jonah: “My dying is better than my being alive.” (Jonah 4:1-3) Yet, his anguish was not permanent. He got over it. So if depression makes your life seem unbearable, remember that it is like the tribulation that Paul said was “temporary.” (2 Corinthians 4:8, 9, 16-18) It will come to an end! No situation is hopeless. Jehovah promises “to revive the heart of those who are in pain.”—Isaiah 57:15, *Lamsa*.

Never stop praying, even if your prayers *seem* in vain. David pleaded: “Do hear, O God, my entreating cry . . . when my heart grows feeble. Onto a rock that is higher than I am may you lead me.” (Psalm 61:1, 2) How does God lead us to an inner confidence that seems inaccessible by our own strength? Eileen, who has struggled with depression for years, answers: “Jehovah has not let me give up. This gives me the hope that if I keep on trying, he will keep on helping. Knowing the truth of the Bible has literally kept me alive. Through many different ways—prayer, the ministry, meetings, the pub-

lications, family, and friends—Jehovah has provided strength for me to keep trying.”

View the disorder as a test of your faith. “You can trust God,” the apostle Paul assures us. “He will not let you be tested more than you can stand. But when you are tested, He will also make a way out so that you can bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13, *Beck*) Yes, God will give you “power beyond what is normal” to carry any emotional load.—2 Corinthians 4:7.

A New World Without Depression!

God has promised soon to remove, by means of his heavenly Kingdom, all the depressing conditions on our earth. His Word declares: “I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart. But exult, you people, and be joyful forever in what I am creating.” (Isaiah 65:17, 18)

These words were initially fulfilled back in 537 B.C.E., at the time when the ancient nation of Is-

rael was restored to its homeland. His people then sang: “We became like those who were dreaming. At that time our mouth came to be filled with laughter, and our tongue with a joyful cry.” (Psalm 126:1, 2) How much grander will be the soon-to-be-realized final fulfillment of this heartwarming prophecy in God’s new world!—2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4.

Under God’s Kingdom (the “new heavens”), a righteous society of people on earth (the “new earth”) will be restored to perfect emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Not that these ones will have no recollection of the past, but in view of all the pleasant things they will then have to think about and to rejoice over, there will be no reason for them to call to mind or to focus on all the sad experiences of the past. Imagine, each morning to awaken with a crystal-clear mind, eager to get on with the day’s activity—no longer hampered by a depressed state!

Fully convinced of the reality of this hope, Lola (mentioned at the outset), said: “Remembering that Jehovah’s Kingdom will straighten out this problem was my greatest help. I knew that the depression would not last forever.” Yes, you can be sure that God soon will make possible absolute victory over depression!



PURSUE GODLY DEVOTION AS BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS

"However, you, O man of God, . . . pursue righteousness, godly devotion."

—1 TIMOTHY 6:11.

WHAT is the most important day in your life? If you are a baptized Witness of Jehovah, undoubtedly you will answer, 'Why, the day I got baptized!' To be sure, baptism is a most important step in your life. It is an outward symbol that you have made a complete and unreserved dedication to Je-

hovah to do his will. Your baptism marks the date of your ordination as a minister of the Most High God, Jehovah.

² Is baptism, though, the *last* step you take in your Christian course? Far from it! To illustrate: In many lands a wedding ceremony marks the end of a period of

1. How would you answer the question, What is the most important day in your life? Why do you so answer?

2. (a) How might it be illustrated that baptism is not the last step you take in your Christian course? (b) What important preliminary steps did you take before getting baptized?



planning and preparation (and usually of courtship). At the same time, it marks the beginning of life together as a married couple. Similarly, your baptism is the culmination of a period of preparation during which you took a number of important preliminary steps. You gained knowledge of God and Christ. (John 17:3) You began to exercise faith in Jehovah as the true God, in Christ as your Savior, and in the Bible as God's Word. (Acts 4:12; 1 Thesalonians 2:13; Hebrews 11:6) You demonstrated that faith by repenting of your former course of action and converting to a righteous course. (Acts 3:19) You then made a decision to dedicate yourself to Jehovah to do his will. (Matthew 16:24) Finally, you were baptized.—Matthew 28:19, 20.

³ Your baptism, though, is not the end but the *beginning* of a life of dedicated sacred service to God. As one Bible scholar noted, the Christian life must not be 'an initial spasm followed by a chronic inertia.' How, then, can you demonstrate that in your case, baptism does not represent simply 'an initial spasm'? It is by pursuing a lifelong course of godly devotion. What is this godly devotion? Why is it necessary to pursue it? How can you cultivate it more fully in your life? The answers should be of keen interest to us, for we must be persons identified by "deeds of godly devotion" if we are to survive the approaching day of Jehovah's judgment.—2 Peter 3:11, 12.

The Meaning of Godly Devotion

⁴ Sometime between 61 and 64 C.E., the apostle Paul wrote his first inspired letter

3. (a) How can we demonstrate that our baptism marks the beginning of a life of dedicated service to God? (b) What questions arise, and why should the answers be of keen interest to us?

4. What did Paul advise Timothy to do, and what was true of Timothy at this time?

to the Christian disciple Timothy. After describing the dangers to which the love of money can lead, Paul wrote: "However, you, O man of God, flee from these things. But pursue . . . godly devotion." (1 Timothy 6:9-11) Interestingly, at this time Timothy was perhaps in his early 30's. He had already traveled extensively with the apostle Paul and had been given the authority to appoint overseers and ministerial servants in the congregations. (Acts 16:3; 1 Timothy 5:22) Yet, Paul advised this dedicated and baptized, mature Christian man to pursue godly devotion.

⁵ What did Paul mean by the expression "godly devotion"? The original Greek word (*eu-se'bei-a*) may be translated literally as "well-reverencing." Regarding its meaning, we read: "*Eusebeia* occurs occasionally in a sense which suggests personal religious devotion in the contemporary inscriptions . . . but its more general meaning in the popular Greek of the Roman period was 'loyalty.' . . . For Christians *eusebeia* is the highest kind of devotion to God." (*Christian Words*, by Nigel Turner) So as used in the Scriptures, the expression "godly devotion" refers to reverence or devotion with loyalty to Jehovah God personally.

⁶ This godly devotion, though, is not simply a worshipful feeling. Just as "faith without works is dead," so, too, godly devotion must find expression in one's life. (James 2:26) In *New Testament Words*, William Barclay wrote: "Not only do [*eu-se'bei-a* and related words] express that feeling of awe and reverence, but they also imply a *worship* which befits that awe, and a life of active *obedience* which befits that reverence." *Eu-se'bei-a* is further defined as "a very practical awareness of God in

5. What is the meaning of the expression "godly devotion"?

6. How does a Christian give evidence of his godly devotion?

every aspect of life.” (*The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, by Michael Green) The Christian, then, must give evidence of his personal attachment to Jehovah by the way he lives his life.—1 Timothy 2:2; 2 Peter 3:11.

Strenuous Effort Needed

⁷ What, though, is involved in developing and manifesting godly devotion? Is it simply a matter of getting baptized? Recall that Timothy, though baptized, was urged to “pursue [literally, ‘be you pursuing’]” it.* (1 Timothy 6:11, *Kingdom Interlinear*) Obviously, Paul was not suggesting that the disciple Timothy lacked godly devotion. Instead, he was impressing upon him the need to *continue pursuing* it with earnestness and zeal. (Compare Philippians 3:14.) Clearly, this was to be a lifelong pursuit. Timothy, like all baptized Christians, could continue to make progress in manifesting godly devotion.

⁸ Strenuous effort is needed for a dedicated, baptized Christian to pursue godly devotion. Writing to baptized Christians who had the prospect of ‘becoming sharers in divine nature,’ the apostle Peter said: “Yes, for this very reason, by your contributing in response all earnest effort, supply to your faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge, to your knowledge self-control, to your self-control endurance, to your endurance godly devotion.” (2 Peter 1:4-6) Obviously, a measure of faith is

* Regarding the Greek word *di-o’ko* (“pursue”), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* explains that in classical writings the word “means lit[erally] to chase, pursue, run after, . . . and fig[uratively] to pursue something zealously, try to achieve something, try to obtain.”

7. What did Paul mean when he urged Timothy, though he was baptized, to “pursue” godly devotion?

8. How did Peter show that strenuous effort is needed for a dedicated, baptized Christian to pursue godly devotion?

needed in order to present ourselves for baptism. However, following baptism we cannot coast, contenting ourselves with mere token Christianity. Rather, as we make progress in Christian living, we need to continue developing other fine qualities, including godly devotion, that can be supplied to our faith. This, Peter says, takes earnest effort on our part.

⁹ The Greek word Peter uses for “supply” (*e-pi-kho-re-ge’o*) has an interesting background and illustrates the degree of effort necessary. It comes from a noun (*kho-re-gos*) that literally means “the leader of a chorus.” It referred to someone who paid all the expenses of training and maintaining a chorus in staging a play. Such men undertook this responsibility voluntarily out of love for their city and paid the expenses out of their own pockets. It was the pride of such men to spend lavishly to provide all that was needed for a noble performance. The word grew to mean “to supply, furnish abundantly.” (Compare 2 Peter 1:11.) So Peter urges us to supply ourselves with, not just a measure of godly devotion, but the fullest possible expression of this precious quality.

¹⁰ Why, though, is such effort needed to cultivate and manifest godly devotion? For one thing, there is the struggle against the fallen flesh. Since “the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up,” it is not easy to pursue a life of active obedience to God. (Genesis 8:21; Romans 7:21-23) “All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted,”

9. (a) How does the Greek word for “supply” illustrate the degree of effort needed to develop godly devotion? (b) What is Peter urging us to do?

10, 11. (a) Why is effort needed to cultivate and manifest godly devotion? (b) How can we win the struggle?

says the apostle Paul. (2 Timothy 3:12) Yes, the Christian who endeavors to live in a way that pleases God must be different from the world. He has a different set of standards and different aims. As Jesus warned, this arouses the hatred of the wicked world.—John 15:19; 1 Peter 4:4.

¹¹ Nevertheless, we can win the struggle, for “Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial.” (2 Peter 2:9) We, though, must do our part by continuing to pursue godly devotion.

Cultivating Godly Devotion

¹² How, then, can you cultivate this godly devotion in fuller measure? The apostle Peter provides a clue. At 2 Peter 1:5, 6, when listing the qualities that must be supplied to our faith, he lists knowledge ahead of godly devotion. Earlier in the same chapter, he wrote: “His divine power has given us freely all the things that concern life and godly devotion, through the accurate knowledge of the one who called us.” (2 Peter 1:3) Peter thus associates godly devotion with accurate knowledge of Jehovah.

¹³ In fact, without accurate knowledge it is impossible to cultivate godly devotion. Why? Well, recall that godly devotion is toward Jehovah personally and is evidenced by the way we live our lives. Accurate knowledge of Jehovah is thus essential, since it involves coming to know him personally, intimately, becoming thoroughly acquainted with his qualities and his ways. More than that, it involves striving to imitate him. (Ephesians 5:1) The more we progress in learning about Jehovah and in reflecting his ways

and qualities in our lives, the better we come to know him. (2 Corinthians 3:18; compare 1 John 2:3-6.) This, in turn, results in a deeper appreciation for Jehovah’s precious qualities, a fuller measure of godly devotion.

¹⁴ How do you gain such accurate knowledge? There are no shortcuts. To gain accurate knowledge, we must be diligent in studying God’s Word and Bible-based publications. Such personal study should include a regular program of Bible reading, such as is scheduled in connection with the Theocratic Ministry School. (Psalm 1:2) Since the Bible is a gift from Jehovah, what we do in the way of personal Bible study is a reflection of how much we appreciate that gift. What do your personal study habits reveal about the depth of your appreciation for Jehovah’s spiritual provisions?—Psalm 119:97.

¹⁵ Admittedly, reading and studying are not easy for some. But with time and effort, you can develop a spiritual appetite for personal Bible study. (1 Peter 2:2) When you reflect appreciatively on all that Jehovah God has done, is doing, and will yet do in your behalf, your heart will move you to learn all you can about him.—Psalm 25:4.

¹⁶ But if such personal Bible study is to result in your developing godly devotion, your objective cannot be simply to cover pages of material or to fill your mind with information. Instead, when you read a portion of God’s Word, you must take the time to reflect on the material, asking yourself such questions as: ‘What does it teach me about Jehovah’s tender qualities

14. To gain accurate knowledge, what should our program of personal study include, and why?
15, 16. (a) What can help us to develop a spiritual appetite for personal Bible study? (b) If personal Bible study is to result in our developing godly devotion, what should be done when reading a portion of God’s Word?

12. How does Peter indicate what is needed to develop godly devotion in fuller measure?

13. Why is accurate knowledge essential in developing godly devotion?

and ways? How can I be more like Jehovah in these respects?

¹⁷ Consider an example. Some time ago our assigned Bible reading in the Theocratic Ministry School took us through the book of Hosea. After reading through this Bible book, you might ask yourself: 'What do I learn about Jehovah as a Person—his qualities and his ways—from this book?' The way it is used by later Bible writers indicates that we learn much about Jehovah's tender mercy from the book of Hosea. (Compare Matthew 9:13 with Hosea 6:6; Romans 9:22-26 with Hosea 1:10 and 2:21-23.) Jehovah's willingness to show mercy to Israel was illustrated by Hosea's dealings with his wife, Gomer. (Hosea 1:2; 3:1-5) Although bloodshed, stealing, fornication, and idolatry were rampant in Israel, Jehovah 'spoke to Israel's heart.' (Hosea 2:13, 14; 4:2) Jehovah was not obligated to show such mercy but would do so of his "own free will," provided that the Israelites manifested heartfelt repentance and turned from their sinful course. (Hosea 14:4; compare Hosea 3:3.) As you reflect in this way on Jehovah's extraordinary mercy, it will stir your heart, strengthening your personal attachment to him.

¹⁸ More, though, is necessary. "Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy," said Jesus. (Matthew 5:7) Therefore, after reflecting on Jehovah's mercy as emphasized in the book of Hosea, ask yourself: 'How can I better imitate Jehovah's mercy in my dealings with others? If a brother or a sister who has sinned against or offended me asks for forgiveness, do I forgive "with cheerfulness"?'

17. (a) What do we learn about Jehovah's mercy from the book of Hosea? (b) How should reflecting on Jehovah's mercy affect us?

18. After reflecting on Jehovah's mercy as emphasized in Hosea, what might you ask yourself?

(Romans 12:8; Ephesians 4:32) If you serve in the congregation as an appointed elder, you might ask yourself: 'When handling judicial matters, how can I better imitate Jehovah, who stands "ready to forgive," particularly when a wrongdoer gives genuine evidence of heartfelt repentance?' (Psalm 86:5; Proverbs 28:13) 'What should I look for as a basis for extending mercy?'—Compare Hosea 5:4 and 7:14.

¹⁹ How rewarding your personal Bible study becomes when done in such a thorough manner! Your heart will swell with appreciation for Jehovah's precious qualities. And by continually striving to imitate these qualities in your life, you will strengthen your personal attachment to him. You will thereby be pursuing godly devotion as a dedicated, baptized servant of Jehovah.—1 Timothy 6:11.

²⁰ A further aid in cultivating this precious quality can be found in Jesus Christ—the perfect example of godly devotion. How will following Jesus' example aid you both in cultivating and in manifesting godly devotion? The article on page 18 will discuss this and related questions.

19, 20. (a) What results when Bible study is done in a thorough manner? (b) What is a further aid in cultivating godly devotion?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ Why is baptism not the last step you take in your Christian course?
- ☐ What is the meaning of "godly devotion," and how do you give evidence of it?
- ☐ Why is strenuous effort needed to develop godly devotion?
- ☐ How can you cultivate godly devotion in fuller measure?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

A Five-Year-Old Stirs Interest

AMONG over 40,000 Witnesses of Jehovah in Venezuela is a five-year-old lad who had an endearing experience. He had listened carefully to public talks based on the publication *Life—How Did It Get Here?—By Evolution or by Creation?* and to later family considerations of this book. The five-year-old, who was from a theocratic family, thus understood that evolution claims that man came into existence from a "soup." One of the passages in the book discusses the evolutionary teaching that life evolved from an organic soup.

For 14 years, a family next door (husband, wife, two teenage sons, and a seven-year-old daughter) had been indifferent to the requests of the Witness family to investigate the Bible and to their invitations to go to the Kingdom Hall.

One day while the Witness wife was washing dishes, she heard an interesting conversation between her son and the little neighbor girl, near the dividing fence. The little boy said: "What do you know! The worldly people say that man came out of a soup!" The little girl answered back, as she usually did: "Are you crazy?" The little boy replied: "No, I'm not crazy. The worldly people say that man came out of a soup; but Jehovah made man." The boy ridiculed the idea, thinking it would be ordinary soup for eating, which he did not like. Then he went on to tell the little girl: "My daddy should give the *Creation* book to your daddy so that he will see that God created man." The little

girl, however, said that they were Catholics, and that ended the conversation.

When the sister's husband, who is an elder, came home from work, she related the conversation she had overheard. Although the incident between the children made them laugh, the brother thought that perhaps Jehovah wanted him to witness once again to this neighbor man. So a few days later, he approached his neighbor and related the children's conversation. He said that on behalf of his son, he wanted to give him a copy of the *Creation* book. The Witness recommended that the neighbor read it without prejudice, as it would show the origin of life.

To the brother's surprise, some days later this couple, who for so

long had been indifferent to the truth, presented themselves at the brother's home expressing regret for the attitude they had held for so many years. They said they marveled at the wonderful quality of the *Creation* book.

The result was that a Bible study was started with this family. They began to attend meetings regularly and soon became publishers of the good news. The man, his wife, and the two teenage sons were baptized at a district convention, and the girl is also a Kingdom publisher. The wife commenced regular auxiliary pioneer service immediately after her baptism.

Jesus Christ knows those whose hearts are good, and he can and does use even little ones to reach such good hearts.

—John 10:14.



*Scenes From
the Promised Land*

**NAZARETH
HOME OF
THE PROPHET**



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

“THE crowds kept telling: ‘This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee!’” Yes, even during Jesus’ ministry, mere mention of him brought to mind the now famous city of Nazareth. Thus, those coming to arrest him did not say that they were looking for Jesus but for “Jesus *the Nazarene*.” —Matthew 21:11; 26:71; John 18:3-5; Acts 26:9.

The picture above shows what you will find if you visit Nazareth today. It is much larger than when an angel came “to a city of Galilee named Nazareth” to tell Mary that she would bear God’s Son. (Luke 1:26-33) Back then, Nazareth was more like the village shown on the next page, square houses grouped on a hillside. Joseph and Mary probably lived in a home similar to these. But just before Mary was to give birth, they had to go south to Bethlehem, and there Jesus was born. They later fled to Egypt to protect the child from Herod’s murderous designs. After that, “they went back into Galilee to their own city Nazareth.” —Luke 2:4, 39; Matthew 2:13-23.

Jesus thus grew up, not in a bustling center like Jerusalem or Tiberias, but in a quiet spot. Nazareth was in a basin surrounded by the hills of Lower Galilee, where grain, grapes, olives, and figs flourished. It enjoyed pleasantly cool summers, yet the winters were not as severe as in Upper Galilee.

Joseph supported his wife, sons, and daughters by working as a carpenter, perhaps having a shop like this one in modern Nazareth. He might have prepared roof beams and wooden doors for houses in town, or tables, stools, and other wood furniture. We know that Jesus watched and learned, for he too came to be called “the carpenter.” (Mark 6:3; Matthew 13:55) The agricultural work around Nazareth likely led to other jobs. Perhaps Jesus shaped a yoke like that seen on these animals. Meanwhile, Joseph may have been using his tools to make plows or threshing sledges to be pulled behind the yoke. —2 Samuel 24:22; Isaiah 44:13.

As a lad, Jesus probably hiked in the area around Nazareth, such as to “Cana of Galilee,” eight miles north, where he later performed his first miracle. (John 2:1-12) Walking about six miles southeast toward the Valley of Jezreel and the Hill of Moreh, Jesus would reach the city of Nain, seen on page 17.* (Judges 6:33; 7:1) Recall that during his first preaching tour, Jesus came upon a funeral procession near Nain. Moved with pity, he resurrected a widow’s son. —Luke 7:11-16.

* Nazareth is #2 on the cover map of the 1990 *Calendar of Jehovah’s Witnesses*. The Hill of Moreh is visible just below #3.



Nazareth was not located on any main routes through the land, yet it had easy access to such roads. You can see this from the cover map of the *1990 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses*, which also has a larger picture of Nazareth today. The east-west route through the Valley of Jezreel linked the seaport of Acre, or Ptolemais, with the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan Valley. Intersecting that was a route coming south from Damascus and running down through Samaria to Jerusalem.

Nazareth had its own synagogue, and early in his ministry, Jesus went there "according to his

custom." He read Isaiah 61:1, 2, applying it to himself. How would the townspeople respond, some of whom had seen him grow up and may even have paid him for carpentry work? They were enraged and tried to throw him off a cliff, but Jesus escaped. (Luke 4:16-30) Evidently, word of what he later did in Nain and elsewhere reached Nazareth, for when he came back and taught in the local synagogue, no one talked of killing him. Still, "he did not do many powerful works there," for acquaintances in Nazareth did not put faith in him as a prophet.—Matthew 13:53-58.

Mark records Jesus' reaction: "A prophet is not un-honored except in his home territory and among his relatives and in his own house." What a pity that this was true of many in Nazareth. Still, we can think of that city as the home of the Prophet whom we choose to honor.—Mark 6:4.





FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE OF GODLY DEVOTION

"The sacred secret of this godly devotion is admittedly great: 'He [Jesus] was made manifest in flesh.'"—1 TIMOTHY 3:16.

IT WAS a question that went unanswered for more than 4,000 years. Ever since the first man, Adam, failed to keep integrity, the question was: How may godly devotion be manifested among

mankind? Finally, in the first century C.E., with the coming of God's Son to earth, the answer was given. In every thought, word, and deed, Jesus Christ demonstrated his personal attachment to Jehovah. He thus unveiled the 'sacred secret of godly devotion,' demonstrating the way for dedicated humans to maintain such devotion.—1 Timothy 3:16.

1. (a) What question went unanswered for more than 4,000 years? (b) When and how was the answer given?

² In pursuing godly devotion as dedicated, baptized Christians, we do well to “consider closely” the example of Jesus. (Hebrews 12:3) Why? For two reasons. First, Jesus’ example can help us to cultivate godly devotion. Jesus knew his Father better than anyone else. (John 1:18) And so closely did Jesus imitate Jehovah’s ways and qualities that he could say: “He that has seen me has seen the Father also.” (John 14:9) Through the life and ministry of Jesus, then, we can gain a deeper appreciation for Jehovah’s tender qualities, thus strengthening our personal attachment to our loving Creator. Second, Jesus’ example can aid us in manifesting godly devotion. He set the perfect example of conduct manifesting godly devotion. We thus do well to consider how we may ‘put on Christ,’ that is, take him as a pattern, imitate his example.—Romans 13:14.

³ Not everything that Jesus said and did was preserved in written form. (John 21:25) Therefore, the things that were recorded under divine inspiration should be of particular interest to us. A program of personal Bible study should therefore include regular reading of the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ life. But if such reading is to help us in our pursuit of godly devotion, we must take the time to reflect appreciatively on what we read. We must also be alert to look beyond the obvious.

Like Father, Like Son

⁴ Consider an example. Jesus was a man of warmth and deep feeling. Notice from Mark 10:1, 10, 13, 17, and 35 that people

of all ages and backgrounds found him approachable. On more than one occasion, he took children into his arms. (Mark 9:36; 10:16) Why did people, even children, feel so at ease with Jesus? Because of his sincere, genuine interest in them. (Mark 1:40, 41) This was evident in that he often took the initiative to approach others in need of help. Thus, we read that he “caught sight” of the widow of Nain whose dead son was being carried away. He then “approached” and resurrected the boy, and there is no mention that anyone asked him to do so. (Luke 7:13-15) He also, without being asked to do so, took the initiative to heal a crippled woman and a man who had dropsy.—Luke 13:11-13; 14:1-4.

⁵ When you read about such incidents, stop and ask yourself: ‘Since Jesus perfectly imitated his Father, what do these accounts tell me about Jehovah’s qualities and ways?’ They should reassure us that Jehovah is a God of warmth and deep feeling. The intensity of his abiding interest in the human family has moved him to take the initiative in dealing with them. He did not have to be coerced into giving his Son “a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matthew 20:28; John 3:16) He looks for opportunities to “get attached” to those who will serve him out of love. (Deuteronomy 10:15) As the Bible says: “[Jehovah’s] eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him.”—2 Chronicles 16:9.

⁶ Reflecting in this way on Jehovah’s warmth and deep feeling, as exemplified by his Son, will touch your heart, filling it

2. In pursuing godly devotion, why should we consider closely the example of Jesus?

3. What should our program of personal Bible study include, and why?

4. (a) What shows that Jesus was a person of warmth and deep feeling? (b) What initiative did Jesus take in dealing with others?

5. What do these accounts of Jesus’ ministry teach us about Jehovah’s qualities and ways?

6. What results when we reflect on Jehovah’s warmth and deep feeling as exemplified by his Son?

with greater appreciation for His tender and appealing qualities. This, in turn, will draw you to him. You will be moved to approach him freely in prayer at all times and under all circumstances. (Psalm 65:2) It will strengthen your personal attachment to him.

⁷ Remember, though, that godly devotion involves more than just worshipful feeling. As Bible scholar R. Lenski notes, it "includes our entire reverent, worshipful attitude *and the actions emanating from it.*" (Italics ours.) So after reflecting on Jehovah's warmth and deep feeling as exemplified by Jesus, ask yourself: 'How can I be more like Jehovah in this respect? Do others find me approachable?' If you are a parent, you must be accessible to your children. And if you are a congregation elder, certainly you should be accessible. What, then, will make you more approachable? Warmth and deep feeling. You must cultivate a sincere, genuine interest in others. When you really care about others and are willing to give of yourself in their behalf, they will sense this and feel drawn to you.

⁸ So as you read Bible accounts about Jesus, keep in mind that you can learn much about Jehovah as a person from the things that Jesus said and did.* And when your appreciation for God's qualities, as reflected by Jesus, moves you to try to be more like Him, you are giving evidence of your godly devotion.

* For some additional examples, consider what we learn about Jehovah from the following accounts: Matthew 8:2, 3; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 21:1-4; and John 11:33-36.

7. After reflecting on Jehovah's warmth and deep feeling, what should you ask yourself, and why?

8. (a) What should you keep in mind as you read Bible accounts about Jesus? (b) What do we learn about Jehovah from the accounts cited in the footnote?

Practicing Godly Devotion Toward Family Members

⁹ The life and ministry of Jesus Christ reveals much about how godly devotion should be manifested. A touching example is recorded at John 19:25-27, where we read: "By the torture stake of Jesus, however, there were standing his mother and the sister of his mother; Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Therefore Jesus, seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved [John] standing by, said to his mother: 'Woman, see! Your son!' Next he said to the disciple: 'See! Your mother!' And from that hour on the disciple took her to his own home."

¹⁰ Imagine that! Just moments before he surrendered his earthly life, Jesus' love and concern moved him to entrust the care of his mother, Mary, (apparently a widow by now) to the beloved apostle John. But why John and not one of Jesus' own fleshly brothers? Because Jesus was concerned not just with Mary's physical, material needs but more especially with her spiritual welfare. And the apostle John (possibly Jesus' cousin) had proved his faith, whereas there is no indication that Jesus' fleshly brothers were, as yet, believers.—Matthew 12:46-50; John 7:5.

¹¹ Now, how was this a manifestation of godly devotion? The apostle Paul explains: "Honor widows that are actually widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let these learn first to practice godly devotion in their own household and to keep paying a due compensation to their parents and grandparents, for this is

9, 10. (a) How were Jesus' love and concern for his mother, Mary, manifested just moments before he died? (b) Why, evidently, did Jesus entrust the care of Mary to the apostle John and not to one of his own fleshly brothers?

11. (a) According to Paul, how may a Christian practice godly devotion in his own household? (b) Why does the genuine Christian make provision for elderly parents?



A Christian father is responsible to provide for his family materially, emotionally, and spiritually

because he loves his family, and he recognizes the high regard that Jehovah places on caring for such responsibility. Thus, his looking after elderly parents is an expression of godly devotion.*

acceptable in God's sight." (1 Timothy 5: 3, 4) Honoring one's parents by providing material support when that becomes necessary is, as Paul says, an expression of godly devotion. How so? Jehovah, the Originator of the family arrangement, commands children to honor their parents. (Ephesians 3:14, 15; 6:1-3) Hence, the genuine Christian recognizes that caring for such family responsibility not only shows love for one's parents but also demonstrates reverence for God and obedience to his commands.—Compare Colossians 3:20.

¹² How, then, can you practice godly devotion toward family members? This would certainly involve arranging to care for the spiritual and material needs of elderly parents, as Jesus did. Failure to do so would reveal a lack of godly devotion. (Compare 2 Timothy 3:2, 3, 5.) The dedicated Christian provides for needy parents not simply out of kindness or duty but

¹³ Godly devotion may be practiced in the home in other ways. For example, a Christian father has a responsibility to provide for his family materially, emotionally, and spiritually. Therefore, in addition to providing material support, he lovingly arranges for a regular family Bible study. He schedules time to share regularly in the field ministry with his family. He is balanced, recognizing their need for rest and recreation too. And he wisely sets priorities, not allowing congregation activity to cause him to neglect his family. (1 Timothy 3:5, 12) Why does he do all of this? Not merely out of a sense of duty but out of love for his family. He recognizes the importance that Jehovah places on caring for one's family. By thus fulfilling his responsibility as husband and father, he is practicing godly devotion.

* For a full discussion of what is involved in practicing godly devotion toward elderly parents, see *The Watchtower*, June 1, 1987, pages 13-18.

12. How can you practice godly devotion toward elderly parents, and what should be the motive?

13. How may a Christian father practice godly devotion toward his family?

¹⁴ Christian wives also have a responsibility to practice godly devotion at home. How? The Bible says that a wife should “be in subjection” to her husband and should have “deep respect” for him. (Ephesians 5:22, 33) Even if her husband is not a believer, she is to “be in subjection” to him. (1 Peter 3:1) The Christian woman demonstrates such wifely submission by supporting her husband in the decisions he makes as long as these do not conflict with God’s laws. (Acts 5:29) And why does she accept this role? Not only because she loves her husband but especially because she recognizes that it is “becoming in the Lord”—that is, it is God’s arrangement for the family. (Colossians 3:18) Her willing subjection to her husband is thus an expression of her godly devotion.

“For This Purpose I Have Gone Out”

¹⁵ One of the outstanding ways that Jesus manifested godly devotion was by ‘declaring the good news of the kingdom of God.’ (Luke 4:43) Following his baptism in the Jordan in 29 C.E., Jesus spent the next three and a half years intensely occupied with this all-important work. “It is for this purpose I have gone out,” he explained. (Mark 1:38; John 18:37) But how was this a manifestation of his godly devotion?

¹⁶ Recall that godly devotion involves living in a way that pleases God because you love him and deeply appreciate his endearing qualities. What, then, was it that motivated Jesus to spend his final years on earth intensely occupied with preaching and teaching? A mere sense of

14. How may a Christian wife manifest godly devotion in the home?

15. In what outstanding way did Jesus manifest godly devotion?

16, 17. (a) What motivated Jesus to be intensely occupied with preaching and teaching?

(b) Why was Jesus’ ministry of preaching and teaching a manifestation of his godly devotion?

duty or obligation? There is no question that he had concern for people. (Matthew 9:35, 36) And he fully realized that his anointing with holy spirit appointed and commissioned him to carry out his ministry. (Luke 4:16-21) Yet, his motives went deeper.

¹⁷ “I love the Father,” Jesus plainly told his apostles on the last night of his earthly life. (John 14:31) That love is based on a very deep, intimate knowledge of Jehovah’s qualities. (Luke 10:22) Motivated by a heart stirred by deep appreciation, Jesus found delight in doing God’s will. (Psalm 40:8) It was his “food”—so necessary for life, so palatable. (John 4:34) He set the perfect example of “seeking first the kingdom” instead of putting self first. (Matthew 6:33) So it was not just what he did or even how much he did but why he did it that made his ministry of preaching and teaching an expression of his godly devotion.

¹⁸ How can we follow the example of the “model,” Jesus, in this regard? (1 Peter 2:21) All who respond to Jesus’ invitation to “come be my follower” have a divine commission to preach the good news of the

18. Why is having some share in the ministry not necessarily a manifestation of godly devotion?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ In pursuing godly devotion, why should we consider the example of Jesus?
- ☐ What do we learn about Jehovah from the warmth and deep feeling exemplified by Jesus?
- ☐ How may we manifest godly devotion toward family members?
- ☐ What must be our motive in order for our ministry to be an expression of godly devotion?



"But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let these . . . keep paying a due compensation to their parents and grandparents."

Kingdom and to make disciples. (Luke 18:22; Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Does this mean that by having some share in declaring the good news, we are pursuing godly devotion? Not necessarily. If we were to engage in the ministry in a perfunctory or token manner, or in order simply to please family members or others, it would hardly be considered a 'deed of godly devotion.'—2 Peter 3:11.

¹⁹ As with Jesus, our motives must go deeper. Jesus said: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart [the emotions, the desires, and the feeling of the inner person] and with your whole soul [your life and entire being] and with your whole mind [your intellectual faculties] and with your whole strength." To this, a discerning scribe added: "This . . . is worth far more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." (Mark 12:

19. (a) What must be the primary reason for what we do in the ministry? (b) What results when we are motivated by a deep-rooted love for God?

30, 33, 34) So it is not only what we do that matters but also why we do it. A deep-rooted love for God that involves our every fiber must be the primary reason for what we do in the ministry. When that is the case, we will not be content with a mere token share, but we will be motivated to demonstrate the depth of our godly devotion by doing our utmost. (2 Timothy 2:15) At the same time, when love for God is our motive, we will not be critical, comparing our ministry with that of others.—Galatians 6:4.

²⁰ How thankful we can be that Jehovah has revealed to us the sacred secret of godly devotion! By carefully studying the things Jesus said and did and by endeavoring to imitate him, we will be helped both to cultivate and to manifest godly devotion in fuller measure. Jehovah will richly bless us as we follow Jesus' example in pursuing godly devotion as dedicated, baptized Christians.—1 Timothy 4:7, 8.

20. How may we benefit fully from Jesus' example in pursuing godly devotion?

Ministry at the Temple Completed

JESUS is making his last appearance at the temple. In fact, he is concluding his public ministry on earth except for the events of his trial and execution three days later. Now he continues his castigation of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Three more times he exclaims: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" First, he proclaims woe on them because they cleanse "the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of plunder and immoderateness." So he admonishes: "Cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside of it also may become clean."

Next he pronounces woe on the scribes and the Pharisees for the inner rottenness and putrefaction that they attempt to hide by outward piety. "You resemble whitewashed graves," he says, "which outwardly indeed appear beautiful but inside are full of dead men's bones and of every sort of uncleanness."

Finally, their hypocrisy is manifest in their willingness to build tombs for the prophets and decorate them to draw attention to their own deeds of charity. Yet, as Jesus reveals, they "are sons of those who murdered the prophets." Indeed, anyone who dares expose their hypocrisy is in danger!

Going on, Jesus utters his strongest words of denunciation. "Serpents, offspring of vipers," he says, "how are you to flee from the judgment of Gehenna?" Gehenna is the valley used as the garbage dump of Jerusalem. So Jesus is saying that for pursuing their wicked

course, the scribes and the Pharisees will suffer everlasting destruction.

Regarding those whom he sends forth as his representatives, Jesus says: "Some of them you will kill and impale, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city; that there may come upon you all the righteous blood spilled on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah [called Jehoiada in 2 Chronicles], whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly I say to you, All these things will come upon this generation."

Because Zechariah courageously chastised Israel's leaders, "they conspired against him and pelted him with stones at the king's commandment in the courtyard of Jehovah's house." But, as Jesus foretells, Israel will pay for all such righteous blood spilled. They pay 37 years later, in 70 C.E., when the Roman armies destroy Jerusalem and over a million Jews perish.

As Jesus considers this frightful situation, he is distressed. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem," he proclaims once again, "how often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks together under her wings! But you people did not want it. Look! Your house is abandoned to you."

Jesus then adds: "You will by no means see me from henceforth until you say, 'Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name!'" That day will be at Christ's presence when he comes into his heavenly Kingdom and people see him with eyes of faith.

Jesus now moves to a place where he can watch the treasury chests in the temple and the crowds dropping money into them. The rich drop in many coins. But then a poor widow comes along and drops in two small coins of very little value.

Calling his disciples over, Jesus says: "Truly I say to you that this poor widow dropped in more than all those dropping money into the treasury chests." They must wonder how this can be. So Jesus explains: "They all dropped in out of their surplus, but she, out of her want, dropped in all of what she had, her whole living." After saying these things, Jesus departs from the temple for the last time.

Marveling at the size and the beauty of the temple, his disciples exclaim: "Teacher, see! what sort of stones and

what sort of buildings!" Indeed, the stones are reportedly over 35 feet long, more than 15 feet wide, and over 10 feet high!

"Do you behold these great buildings?" Jesus replies. "By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down."

After saying these things, Jesus and his apostles cross the Kidron Valley and climb the Mount of Olives. From there they can look down on the magnificent temple.

Matthew 23:25-24:3; Mark 12:41-13:3; Luke 21:1-6; 2 Chronicles 24:20-22.

- ♦ What does Jesus do during his final visit to the temple?
- ♦ How is the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees manifested?
- ♦ What is meant by "the judgment of Gehenna"?
- ♦ Why does Jesus say that the widow contributed more than the rich?



Babylon's Fall Published in Japan

“SHE has fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen, she who made all the nations drink of the wine of the anger of her fornication!” That stirring angelic announcement was heard for the first time by the apostle John back in the first century of our Common Era. During our time, however, in “the Lord’s day,” it has been echoed by Christian Witnesses of Jehovah in the hearing of all mankind.—Revelation 1:10; 14:8.

Babylon the Great is the worldwide system of false religion, of which Christendom is the most reprehensible part. Throughout “the time of the end,” Jehovah’s judgments against her have been boldly published by Jehovah’s Witnesses around the world. (Daniel 12:4) For example, the *Watchtower* issues of April and May last year carried powerful articles exposing the guilt of false religion and her coming destruction. More than 50 million copies of those issues were distributed worldwide—a mighty declaration of the doom of Babylon the Great!



Japan Gears Up

An example of the enthusiasm of Jehovah’s Witnesses for those special issues was seen in Japan, stronghold of the Shinto-Buddhist sector of Babylon the Great. In Japan the December 1988 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry* notified the congregations of a special campaign of field service planned for the months of April and May 1989. Calls to support this special magazine activity went out in subsequent issues of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, as well as through letters to the congregations and the bodies of elders.

The response was outstanding. With Jehovah’s help, during those two months

of last year, Japan received a witness as never before.

Auxiliary Pioneer Service

The December 1988 announcement included these words: "We encourage you to have the goal of enjoying auxiliary pioneering during April and May, especially April." This thought was repeated in the February 1989 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, which urged the brothers to 'adjust their daily schedule so as to have as many dedicated ministers as possible enroll as auxiliary pioneers in April.'

The Witnesses took these reminders to heart. The result? An all-time peak in the number of auxiliary pioneers. In March 1989 the number of auxiliary pioneers had already reached a new peak of 24,115. But in April that figure was almost doubled to 41,055. Truly a remarkable effort!

In many congregations, all or most publishers shared in some feature of the full-time service in the course of the two months of special activity. This often took a lot of organizing. One housewife doubted that she could share, since she lives almost 3,000 feet up in the mountains where transportation services are limited. Nevertheless, she really wanted to auxiliary pioneer. So the elders arranged to help her with transportation, and she, along with all the other publishers in the congregation, enjoyed a month of pioneering.

The fine lead of the elders was exemplified in the Osaka Prefecture, Takatsuki City, Otsuka Congregation of 77 publishers, where all elders and ministerial servants were among the 73 who shared in some form of pioneer service. Those pioneers also included all the young baptized publishers still attending school. The pioneer spirit shown by these young Witnesses was typical of that seen in many congregations. For example, of the 23

baptized teenagers in the Heiwadai Congregation in Tokyo Prefecture, 11 are regular pioneers, and 11 auxiliary pioneered in April. In that congregation, a total of 93 publishers pioneered in that same month.

A Special Day of Activity

The March issue of the Japanese edition of *Our Kingdom Ministry* encouraged the brothers with these words: "Magazine work has been supported on not only the second and the fourth Saturdays but on every Saturday of the month. The zeal the brothers are showing is commendable. In April the magazine work is also scheduled for every Saturday, but please make a special effort to set aside April 8 for magazine day so that everyone may share in magazine work on that day. In order to sound a warning to all who will listen, it is necessary to distribute these timely issues widely."—Isaiah 61:2; Revelation 18:4, 5.

In February the Japanese edition of *Our Kingdom Ministry* had stressed this vital work. It said: "On the second Saturday, April 8, let every one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan—now numbering over 130,000—share in the magazine work." Elders were encouraged to schedule different kinds of magazine activity covering the whole day so that as many as possible could take part. Thanks to the positive response of the elders and the wholehearted support of the rest of the publishers, the day was a resounding success. We could say that on that day a crescendo was reached in Japan in the proclamation of Jehovah's judgments on Babylon the Great.

For instance, in the Ushioda Congregation in Yokohama City, the elders arranged for service that would continue for 13 hours, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Included were two periods of street witnessing, as well as times for visiting people who previously had not been at home and for

regular house-to-house witnessing. Most publishers were able to share in at least one of the arranged features of service, and a number shared in almost every feature of activity planned.

Continuous service was also planned in the Jonan Congregation, Fukuoka City. There, arrangements were made covering the hours from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., with just a short break at midday. Included was time for house-to-house witnessing, visiting business territory and shopping areas, and calling where nobody had been contacted on previous visits. Some Witnesses in that congregation reported up to eight hours of preaching activity for the day!

The wholehearted response of the brothers was seen in Wakayama Prefecture, where all 55 publishers in the Kainan Congregation shared in the special day of activity. One sister there, a regular pioneer, gave birth on April 7. Did that stop her from witnessing on April 8? No. She offered the magazines right there in the hospital! Showing a similar spirit, a brother from Osaka Prefecture was forced to attend to matters at his secular workplace on April 8. How could he share in the special activity? He made his workplace his territory and obtained five subscriptions.

A sister in Saitama Prefecture longed to share in the special activity for the day, but she had to travel almost 800 miles to Asahikawa City with her unbelieving husband. She did not give up, though. In Asahikawa, she went with her two small children to the railroad station, and there, outside the station, she found what she had hoped for: a crowd of publishers from the local congregation engaged in field service. She was able to share with them in the day's activities.

Street Witnessing

The Japanese *Our Kingdom Ministry* especially encouraged elders to arrange

street witnessing for April 8, and this became a prominent feature of that special day. As it happened, there was heavy rainfall throughout the country, but that did not dampen the brothers' enthusiasm. Most showed the same spirit as that seen in three handicapped sisters in the Minamata Congregation, Kumamoto Prefecture. Despite their ages—65, 80, and 85—they braved the bad weather and were a fine encouragement to the rest of the congregation; they also attracted the attention of many passersby.

While doing street witnessing, one sister in Kashiwa City West Congregation asked a man: "Have you ever heard of Babylon the Great?" When she offered the April issues of the magazines, the man said, "Not interested" and walked away. However, when he came to the railway crossing and stopped, he was muttering to himself, "What is Babylon the Great?" A brother who was doing street witnessing nearby overheard him and walked along the road with him, explaining what Babylon the Great is. The man accepted the magazines.

Some congregations had never before done street witnessing. But since April 8, they have made it a regular part of their activity. And no wonder! Street witnessing is a very successful way of finding people who are not otherwise accessible. One sister in Naha City, Okinawa, engaged in street witnessing outside an office building that Jehovah's Witnesses are not allowed to enter for the purpose of witnessing. She placed 12 magazines in an hour by approaching those entering and leaving the building.

A sister in Muroran City, Hokkaido, engaged in street witnessing outside department stores in the city center. She told a man who accepted the magazines: "If you would like to learn more, we can visit you in your home." He gave her his

address, his telephone number, a map to his house, and the times when he would be at home! The following week, she and a brother visited him and found that he lived in an apartment that was closed to regular ministerial visits by Jehovah's Witnesses. The young man had been convinced by his personal Bible reading that Christendom did not have God's favor. He was searching for true Christianity and was happy to start a regular home Bible study.

A publisher in Kawasaki City shared in street witnessing on the afternoon of April 8. At the end of the time she had allotted, she spoke to one last person, a young woman who said that she had previously studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. But she had met with opposition from her parents and afterward had entered university and moved into a dormitory. So she quit her study. However, thanks to street witnessing, she gladly started her Bible study anew and is already attending meetings.

Magazine Distribution

As a result of so many supporting the special activity, placements of magazines—especially those carrying the judgment messages against Babylon the Great—were tremendous. A congregation publisher in Osaka Prefecture placed 205 magazines in April. In the Kagoshima City, East Congregation, 14 publishers placed more than a hundred magazines each, while the isolated group of 12 publishers in Ogawa Town, Ibaraki Prefecture, distributed a total of 1,388 magazines during April.

Indeed, in Japan as a whole, 3,293,266 magazines were placed in April of last year—92 percent more than in April of 1988! How powerfully Jehovah's judgment message sounded out against Babylon the Great!

Power Beyond What Is Normal

Certainly, as in all other parts of the world, Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan were positive and zealous in the spring of 1989. Their experiences gave clear evidence that Jehovah blessed their zeal and supported their efforts to publish his judgments against false religion. For some, it was not easy to take part; nevertheless, they were determined, and Jehovah blessed their zeal. Many live in territory that is frequently worked, but they showed the same spirit of urgency and enthusiasm as their brothers in other areas. In all cases, the words of Isaiah proved true: "He is giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound."—Isaiah 40:29.

No doubt their experiences reminded them of the words of the apostle Paul: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not that out of ourselves." (2 Corinthians 4:7) Yes, when a person puts the Christian ministry, "this treasure," first in his life, he experiences God-given "power beyond what is normal." May Jehovah continue to use his servants in Japan and in all other lands to give a thorough witness before the end comes.—Matthew 24:14.

This year, the April and May issues of *The Watchtower* will feature cover series on "Who Will Lead Mankind to Peace?" "World Peace—What Will It Really Mean?" "Millions Now Dead Will Live Again," and "Armageddon—When?" Why not plan to share this information with your neighbors? Be sure that as many as possible are made aware of the wonderful good news that God has preserved in the Bible for our day.

Honesty Is the Best Policy

HONESTY is highly commended in the Bible and is a requirement for true Christians. (Matthew 22:39; 2 Corinthians 8:21) Moreover, honesty really is the best policy, as is demonstrated in the lives of many today whose minds and hearts have been transformed by accurate Bible knowledge. An example of this comes from Liberia.

After much prayerful consideration, a Christian elder and his wife closed their tailor shop. Why? Because it consumed too much of their time and hindered their ministerial activities and personal study. They agreed to be satisfied with a modest income derived from the sale of cloth dyes. Immediately after they took this step, however, dye prices fell on the local market. Their income now would not sustain the family. What would they do?

They asked the company supplying the dye to lower their prices, thus allowing a better margin of profit. This was refused. However, the company offered to send two invoices, one showing the actual price and the other a reduced price that they could present to Customs so as to pay less duty. This would allow the elder to enjoy \$2,000 illegal profit on each consignment.

The brother refused to be part of an operation that was dishonest and would defraud the government. Company officials were surprised. They wrote: "We respect your conscience," and they appointed the elder sole agent for their product in Liberia. With the family's material needs now adequately cared for, the elder and his wife have been able to auxiliary pioneer, working closely with the brothers to build up the congregation. Truly, their honesty proved to be a blessing for them.

Alfonso, in Spain, also found that honesty is the best policy. This lad left home at the age of 12, and before long he was selling drugs, as well as robbing cars, homes, and shops. Sometimes he robbed as many as ten stores in one day. At age 21, four of his associates severely beat him, stole his entire drug supply, and threatened to kill him if he reported them to the police. Since he was well-known by the police, he was even afraid to go to the hospital for treatment.

While slowly recovering from his wounds, Alfonso reflected seriously on his way of life. He remembered things about the Bible and Christian principles that his mother had told him when he was a child. Then, he had ignored her words, but now he requested a Bible study with Jehovah's Witnesses. In six months he had completely changed his conduct and personality and qualified for baptism.

However, on the day before his baptism, he received a citation to appear in court to face a charge of armed robbery. It was a crime he had committed quite some time in the past. Nevertheless, Alfonso openly confessed the wrongdoing and was imprisoned pending trial. His defense lawyer urged him to state that he had not stolen anything and that he was not carrying a gun. But Alfonso insisted on telling the truth. Because of the offense and his bad police record, the prosecutor demanded a sentence of 13 years. But in view of his good conduct and honest attitude, he was given six months, which time he had already served while awaiting trial.

Now Alfonso and his wife serve Jehovah faithfully, happy to have found a real purpose in life and to have proved by their own experience that honesty is the best policy.

Finding Happiness—But Where?

JESUS said: “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need.” (Matthew 5:3) A sincere young girl in the Middle East was conscious of her spiritual need and was seeking to please God. Eventually, she found happiness—but where? We will let her explain.

“I was raised in a very religious Catholic Maronite family. We children were trained to pray every evening before statues, and from childhood I had the desire to serve God.

“At the age of 17, I entered a convent to become a nun, thinking that this would be a way to satisfy my desire. However, I saw many things among the nuns that troubled me. They gossiped about one another. Students were not given enough to eat, while the nuns enjoyed the best of food. And there were immoral practices between the nuns and the priest. Bitterly disappointed, I left the convent after nine months and went back home.

“I still had a lot of unanswered questions, and when I could not find satisfying answers to them, I got to the point of not caring about religion. Then, in 1982, when I was 22, my fleshly brother and sister studied the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. My parents and I opposed them. My brother suffered a lot of persecution, beatings, and imprisonment because of his new faith. What impressed me, though, were the great changes that he made in his life. Moreover, he gave logical Bible answers to the questions that I had been asking for a long time. So I secretly started to read the Bible myself during the night.

“One day I went along to observe an assembly of Jehovah’s Witnesses. I was impressed by the love shown there. There was no difference between the rich and the poor. The Witnesses live in harmony with what

they teach. I was convinced they had the truth.

“Right after the assembly, I asked one of them to study with me. I told her that I just wanted to study, not attend meetings or go out preaching. However, I soon realized that I was learning the truth. I prayed and decided to serve Jehovah. On October 28, 1983, my brother, my sister, and I were baptized. I had now found the way to satisfy the desire to serve God that I had had from childhood.

“Two months after baptism, I started auxiliary pioneering, and eight months later I became a regular pioneer. A year and a half later, I was invited to serve at the branch office of Jehovah’s Witnesses, known as Bethel, which I did on a temporary basis for two years. I was impressed by the humility shown by all. The more responsible brothers even shared in the task of washing the dishes after the evening meal.

“On March 14, 1988, I became a permanent member of the Bethel family. What a happy occasion! Yes, I found happiness. Where? Among Jehovah’s dedicated Witnesses! Now I feel like the psalmist who said: ‘A day in your courtyards is better than a thousand elsewhere.’”—Psalm 84:10.

In Our Next Issue

- What Does Jesus’ Death Mean to You?
- ‘The Faithful Slave’ and Its Governing Body
- How to Help Depressed Ones Regain Joy

Awake!

Widely Appreciated

Awake! is published in 55 languages, and it has an average printing of 11,930,000 copies per issue. Readers from around the world enjoy it and benefit from it, as their letters of appreciation reveal. The Watch Tower branch office in Thailand received the following request:

"Our school is regularly receiving the *Awake!* magazine [in Thai], and we notice that the September 8, 1988, issue is on the subject 'Parents,' which all parents of schoolchildren should read. We therefore would like you to send us 250-400 copies, if available, to distribute at the next parents/teachers meeting."

A woman from Roanoke, Virginia, U.S.A., writes: "I am a devout Baptist . . . , but I picked up one of your papers *Awake!* in a neighborhood Laundromat and have been so enlightened. I have enjoyed reading it. I am herewith enclosing a [\$5 check], for which send me a year's subscription to *Awake!*"

Awake!

September 8, 1988



PARENTS

You Have Hope