December 1, 1990

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Which God Do You WORSHIP?

The Watchtower®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

December 1, 1990
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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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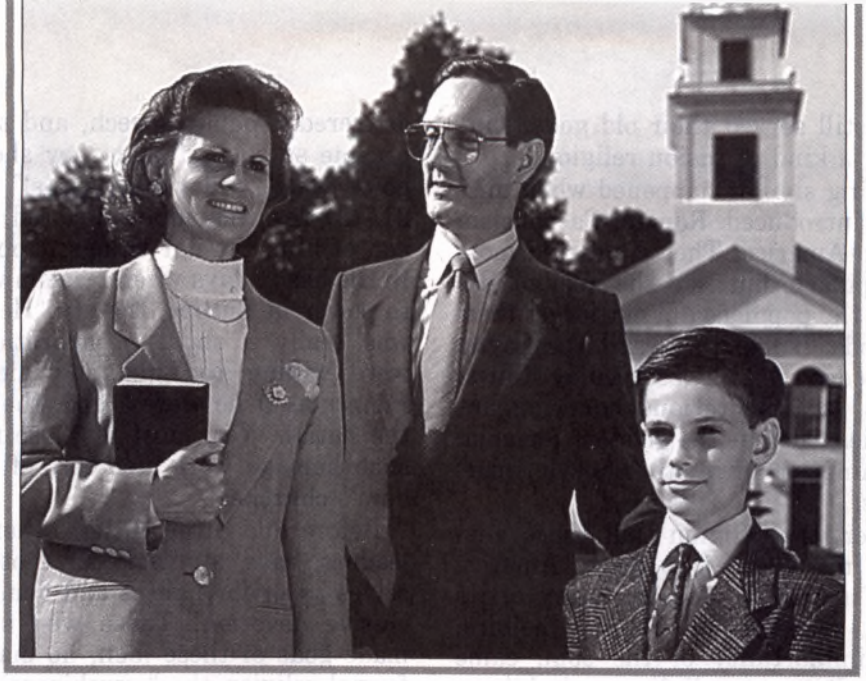


Which God Do You WORSHIP?

AROUND the world, people would answer that question in many different ways. The apostle Paul observed: "There are many 'gods' and many 'lords,'" and today the gods worshiped number into the millions. (1 Corinthians 8:5) Did you know, however, that many people worship a different god from the one they think they are worshiping? And did you realize that many atheists are more devout than those who believe in a god? In what way?

Well, one meaning of worship is "to regard with great, even extravagant respect, honor, or devotion." In the original Bible languages, the words for worship carry the thought of service or bowing down before someone. With this in mind, let us see how people can be mistaken as to whom or what they are really worshiping.

Fusion Worship

Take the example of the ancient Samaritans. Many of these were originally foreigners that the Assyrians introduced into Palestine to replace the exiled ten northern tribes of Israel. Previously, they had followed pagan gods, but now they made an effort to learn about Jehovah, the God of Israel. Did they then abandon their old religion? No. The Bible reports: "It was according to their former religion that they were doing. And these nations came to be fearers of Jehovah, but it was their own graven images that they proved to be serving." (2 Kings 17:40, 41) So the Samaritans, while nominally recognizing

Jehovah, still served their old gods, thus practicing a kind of fusion religion.

Something similar happened when missionaries introduced Roman Catholicism into South America. They converted most of the populace, but like the ancient Samaritans, the populace did not forget their former gods. Thus, in Brazil the pagan rites of voodoo are still observed by "Christians," as are celebrations honoring ancient deities, such as the goddess Iemanjá. Similar things occur in other South American lands.

Moreover, the religion that those missionaries introduced into South America was itself a fusion religion. Many of its doctrines, such as the Trinity, hellfire, and the immortality of the soul, came from ancient pagan religions and philosophies. They were certainly not found in the Bible. Similarly, its feasts—including Christmas and Easter—were of non-Christian origin.* Is it possible to observe such pagan festivals and believe in such non-Christian doctrines and still worship the God of the Bible, who said: "You must not have any other gods against my face"? (Exodus 20:3) Surely not!

"Guard Yourselves From Idols"

Consider another way that people are deceived in the matter of worship. The apostle John wrote: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21) About a thousand million people are listed as belonging to Christendom, and these presumably claim to worship the same God that John worshiped. Yet, hundreds of millions of them bow to images of "saints," of Jesus, and of the virgin Mary.

There are other subtle forms of idolatry. In the year 44 C.E., King Herod Agrippa delivered a public speech, and the people became so excited that they shouted: "A god's voice, and not a man's!" (Acts 12: 21, 22) Yes, they idolized Herod, making a god of him. Similar things happen today. In the heady days when Nazism was rising to power in Europe, the cry "Heil Hitler!" was really a shout of adoration. Many were willing to fight and die for the *Führer* as if he were a god, the savior of the nation. Yet, most of those rendering such homage were members of Christendom's churches!

Before and after Hitler, other political leaders have similarly promoted themselves as savior figures and demanded exclusive devotion. Those who succumbed made gods of these men, no matter what formal religion the "worshipers" belonged to or even if they claimed to be atheists. The homage that charismatic sports stars, movie stars, and other entertainers receive from their fans also is akin to worship.

Worship of Money

Further, think of the implications of Jesus' words when he said: "No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches." (Matthew 6:24) Do you know anyone who belongs to a religion but whose chief interest in life is making money? Who, then, is such a one really serving, God or riches? How many unbelievers do you know who are caught up in the frenetic pursuit of money? Surely, they too are money worshipers, perhaps more zealous than many believers.

The apostle Paul explained a similar principle when he wrote: "Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and *covetousness, which is idolatry.*" (Colossians 3:5)

* For further information, see the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, pages 212-13, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

If we covet something so strongly that we expend all our efforts toward gaining it, perhaps even breaking the law in the process, then to us that thing is an idol, a god. (Ephesians 5:5) In another letter, Paul wrote of certain wrongdoers: "Their god is their belly." (Philippians 3:19) If our whole purpose in life is pleasing ourselves, filling our belly as it were, then we are our own god. How many do you know who worship this kind of god?

Yes, as the apostle Paul wrote: "There are many 'gods' and many 'lords.'" And in many cases, their worshipers are like the ancient Samaritans, serving one god by their words and another by their actions. In fact, though, there is only one God who deserves our worship. Do you know who he is? Further, there is one thing that unites the worship of all other gods apart from him. What is that? We will see in the following article.

Which God Should You WORSHIP?

FIRST, who is the one God that alone should be worshiped? The Bible answers in a very straightforward way. The book of Revelation declares: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created." (Revelation 4:11) Yes, Jehovah, the Creator, is the only God who deserves our worship. Why? We will return to that question shortly. But first, let us talk about the other gods worshiped by mankind.

Behind All the False Gods

Although men serve many gods, the truth is that all the worship rendered to all the gods in all the nations—apart from worship rendered to Jehovah, the Creator—serves the purpose of just one god. In what way? Read the words of the apostle Paul to the Christians in Corinth. In that city many deities were worshiped, from licentious Aphrodite to Aesculapius, their god of healing. Paul showed, however, that really there was just one sinister power behind all those gods. He wrote: "The things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God." (1 Corinthians 10:20) Yes, the pagan Corinthians worshiped demons.

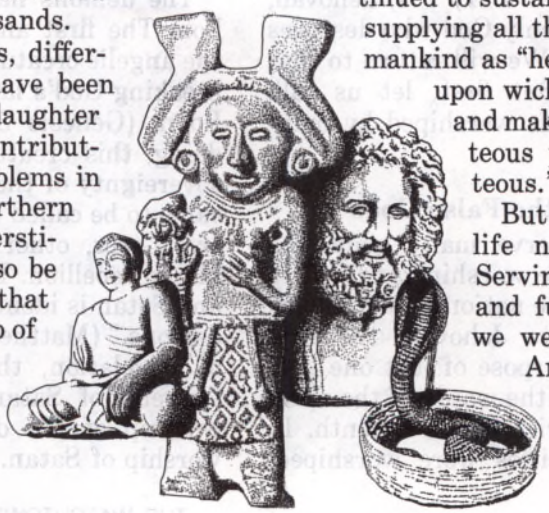
The demons had their origin in rebellion. The first and greatest of them was the angelic creature that seduced Eve into breaking God's law back in the garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:1-6; John 8:44) In so doing, this creature rebelled against the sovereignty of the Creator. Afterward, he came to be called Satan, meaning "Resister." Later, other spirit creatures joined him in rebellion. They too became demons, and Satan is identified as "the ruler of the demons." (Matthew 12:24, 26) In the book of Revelation, these demons are called "angels" of Satan. (Revelation 12:7) So worship of the demons is the same as worship of Satan.

Satan has enormous influence. The apostle John said that "the whole world" is lying in his power, and Paul called him "the god of this system of things." (1 John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4) Hence, worship of any god apart from Jehovah is really worship of Satan. At the very least, it serves the purposes of Satan because his goal is to seduce the children of Adam and Eve to rebel against Jehovah. Since Satan is "misleading the entire inhabited earth," clearly he has succeeded in the vast majority of cases. (Revelation 12:9) But not in all. There are still millions who strive to worship Jehovah. Why?

The Fruits of Wrong Worship

For one thing, they know that worship of gods other than Jehovah costs more than they want to pay. Archaeological excavations of ancient Carthage in North Africa uncovered a graveyard of children. In it were the skeletons of young ones who had been sacrificed to the Phoenician god Baal. Child sacrifice was the terrible price those Carthaginians paid for the worship of Baal. Medieval Catholicism also exacted a price when it caused immeasurable suffering in bloodthirsty Crusades and cruel Inquisitions. The worship of the Inca gods of pre-Columbian America involved the ritual killing of thousands.

In more modern times, different forms of worship have been involved in wholesale slaughter in India, and they have contributed to grave political problems in the Middle East and Northern Ireland. Ignorance, superstition, and fear should also be listed as part of the price that man pays for the worship of his many gods.



Some of the gods Satan has induced mankind to worship

Why Should You Serve Jehovah God?

On the other hand, worship of Jehovah brings only benefits. For one thing, he is "the One who lives forever and ever, who created the heaven and the things in it and the earth and the things in it and the sea and the things in it." (Revelation 10:6) Thus, we should worship him because he is our Creator.

Further, we should worship Jehovah God because his qualities *invite* us to worship him. The apostle John said that "God is love." (1 John 4:8) The faithful man Job said that "[God] is wise in heart and strong in power." (Job 9:4) Moses sang of him: "The Rock, perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he." (Deuteronomy 32:4) Who would hesitate to serve such a God?

In addition, the Bible says: "Godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8) How true this is! Jehovah wants what is good for mankind. He provided the earth as a beautiful home for his creation, and he made abundant provision so that life could be enjoyable. Despite man's rebellion, God has continued to sustain life on this earth, supplying all the material needs of mankind as "he makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous."—Matthew 5:45.

But the "promise of the life now" goes further. Serving God is satisfying and fulfilling. It is what we were designed to do. And God helps those who faithfully serve him to make a success

The prospects of the life that is to come should make us want to serve Jehovah

of life. Through the Bible, he gives guidance to single persons, married couples, children —people in all walks of life. He gives reliable, practical wisdom to help in all situations so that we can solve the problems of living as imperfect humans in a world under Satan's influence. If we worship God in a way that pleases him, we can enjoy "the peace of God that excels all thought."—Philippians 4:7.

Noteworthy, too, is the "promise of the life . . . which is to come." Jesus told the Pharisee Nicodemus: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Everlasting life! What deity other than Jehovah can promise such a thing and then fulfill his promise? The final condition of those who receive that grand gift is described in Revelation: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." (Revelation 21: 4, 5) Truly, the prospects of the life that is to come should make us want to serve Jehovah!

Which God, then, should we worship? Only Jehovah, the Creator. Of all deities, only to him do the words apply: "Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal? For all the nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous decrees have been made manifest." (Revelation 15:3, 4) How wise are those who respond to the exhortation of the psalmist: "O come in, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker"!—Psalm 95:6.

Before the Sanhedrin, Then to Pilate

THE night is drawing to a close. Peter has denied Jesus for the third time, and the members of the Sanhedrin have finished with their mock trial and have dispersed. However, they meet again Friday morning as soon as it becomes dawn, this time at their Sanhedrin Hall. Their purpose likely is to give some appearance of legality to the night trial. When Jesus is brought before them, they say, as they did during the night: "If you are the Christ, tell us."

"Even if I told you, you would not believe it," Jesus answers. "Moreover, if I questioned you, you would not answer." However, Jesus courageously points to his identity, saying: "From now on the Son of man will be sitting at the powerful right hand of God."

"Are you, therefore, the Son of God?" they all want to know.

"You yourselves are saying that I am," Jesus replies.

For these men intent on murder, this answer is sufficient. They consider it blasphemy. "Why do we need further witness?" they ask. "For we ourselves have heard it out of his own mouth." So they bind Jesus, lead him away, and hand him over to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.

Judas, Jesus' betrayer, has been observing the proceedings. When he sees that Jesus has been condemned, he feels remorse. So he goes to the chief priests and older men to return the 30 pieces of silver, explaining: "I sinned when I betrayed righteous blood."

"What is that to us? You must see to that!" they heartlessly reply. So Judas throws the silver pieces into the temple and goes off and tries to hang himself. However, the branch to which Judas ties the rope apparently breaks, and his body plunges to the rocks below, where it bursts apart.

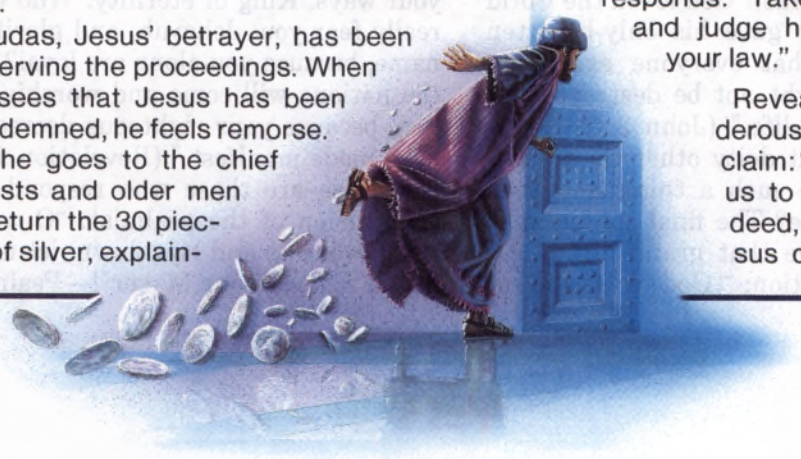
The chief priests are not sure what to do with the silver pieces. "It is not lawful to drop them into the sacred treasury," they conclude, "because they are the price of blood." So, after consulting together, they purchase with the money the potter's field to bury strangers. The field thus comes to be called "Field of Blood."

It is still early in the morning when Jesus is taken to the governor's palace. But the Jews who have accompanied him refuse to enter because they believe that such intimacy with Gentiles will defile them. So to accommodate them, Pilate comes out. "What accusation do you bring against this man?" he asks.

"If this man were not a wrongdoer, we would not have delivered him up to you," they answer.

Desiring to avoid involvement, Pilate responds: "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law."

Revealing their murderous intent, the Jews claim: "It is not lawful for us to kill anyone." Indeed, if they killed Jesus during the Pass-



over Festival, it would likely cause a public uproar, since many hold Jesus in high regard. But if they can get the Romans to execute him on a political charge, this will tend to absolve them of responsibility before the people.

So the religious leaders, not mentioning their earlier trial during which they condemned Jesus for blasphemy, now trump up different charges. They make the three-part accusation: "This man we found [1] subverting our nation and [2] forbidding the paying of taxes to Caesar and [3] saying he himself is Christ a king."

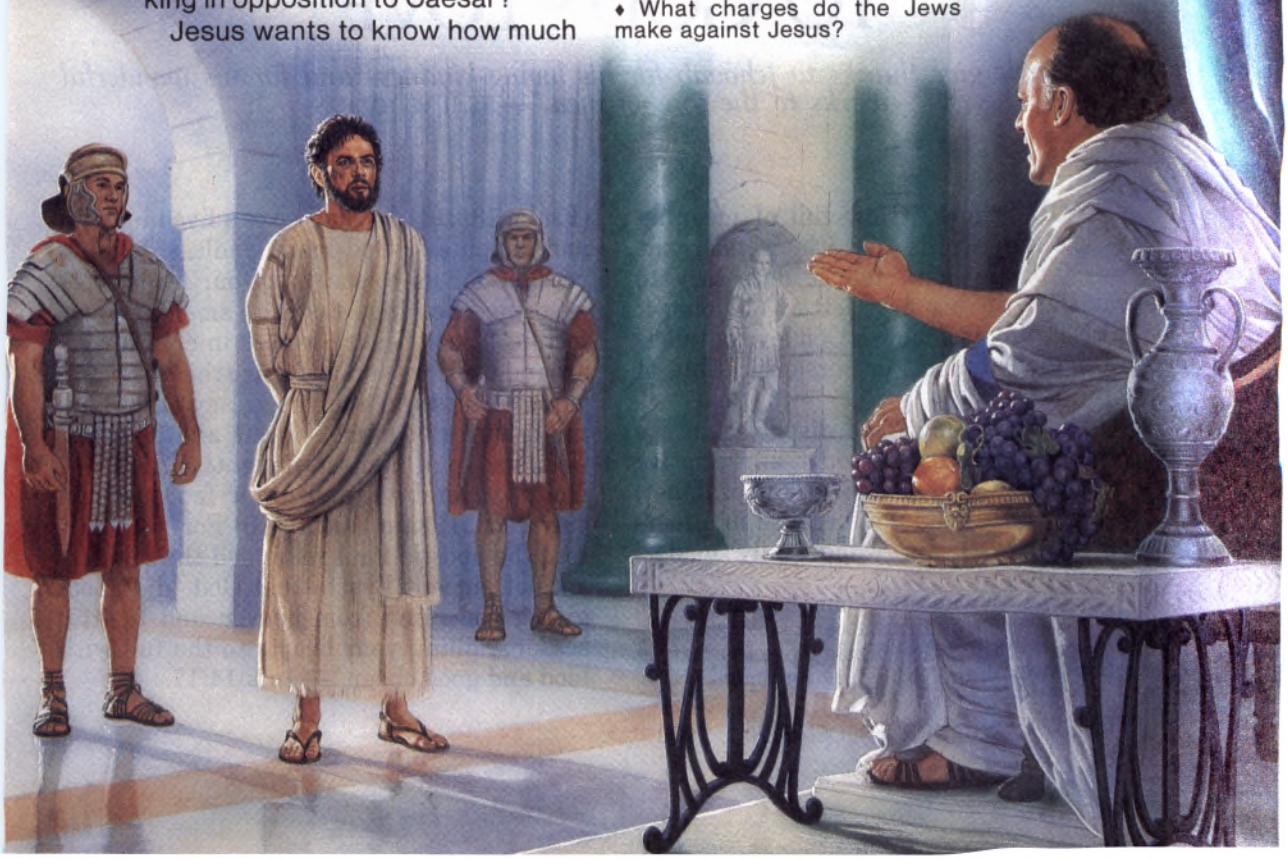
It is the charge that Jesus claims to be a king that concerns Pilate. He, therefore, enters the palace again, calls Jesus to him, and asks: "Are you the king of the Jews?" In other words, have you broken the law by declaring yourself to be a king in opposition to Caesar?

Jesus wants to know how much Pilate already has heard about him, so he asks: "Is it of your own originality that you say this, or did others tell you about me?"

Pilate professes ignorance about him and a desire to learn the facts. "I am not a Jew, am I?" he responds. "Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you up to me. What did you do?"

Jesus in no way attempts to dodge the issue, which is that of kingship. The answer that Jesus now gives no doubt surprises Pilate. **Luke 22:66–23:3; Matthew 27:1-11; Mark 15:1; John 18:28-35; Acts 1:16-20.**

- For what purpose does the Sanhedrin meet again in the morning?
- How does Judas die, and what is done with the 30 pieces of silver?
- Why do the Jews want the Romans to kill Jesus, rather than kill him themselves as they had tried to do on earlier occasions?
- What charges do the Jews make against Jesus?



THEY RESPONDED UNSELFISHLY TO GOD'S LOVE

"O let people give thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness and for his wonderful works to the sons of men."—PSALM 107:8.

"GOD is love." How full of meaning those words are! No wonder the apostle John felt it necessary to repeat them in his first letter. (1 John 4: 8, 16) Not only is Jehovah God love but he is also the embodiment, or personification, of love.

[2] Think of the love God displayed in the way he created us. David's appreciative words are so fitting. As an inspired psalmist, he said: "I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:14) So that we can live in health and happiness, God made endless delights possible for us by means of our five senses —seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling. What beauty we see in creation all around us! How wonderful are the many and varied plants and animals, to say nothing of the beauties of human forms and features! God also put a most delightful array of fruits, vegetables, and other foods within our reach. (Psalm 104:13-16) For good reason, the apostle Paul reminded the inhabitants of ancient Lystra that God "did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer."—Acts 14:17.

1. How does the apostle John emphasize the quality of love in his first letter?
2. In what ways did God display love in creating man and woman and providing for them?

Do you know how Moses responded to God's love?

[3] Think also of all the blessings associated with happy family life. More than that, reflect on all the pleasures it is possible for us to enjoy because of our mental and emotional faculties: imagination, reason, memory, conscience, and particularly the capacity to worship—all of which puts us far above the animals; nor should we overlook the pleasures that music can give us. These and many other gifts are manifestations of God's love for us.

[4] There is no question that Adam and Eve enjoyed manifold delights in their perfect state in the garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:7-9, 22, 23) But when they failed to respond unselfishly to all the evidences of the divine love they were enjoying, did God cast off the human race? Not at all! He promptly made provision for righting all the wrongs resulting from the transgression of our first parents. (Genesis 3:15) Jehovah also manifested love by patiently putting up with Adam's imperfect offspring. (Romans 5:12) For how long? Why, for some 6,000 years till now! Especially has God displayed love in dealing with his servants. True are the words: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin."—Exodus 34:6, 7.

[5] Yes, great indeed was the patience Jehovah God showed in his dealings with the Israelites from the time when he brought them forth as a nation at the foot of Mount Sinai until their waywardness compelled him to cast them off completely. As we read at 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16: "Jehovah the God of their forefathers kept sending against them by means of his messengers, sending again and again, because he felt compassion for his people and for his dwelling. But they were continually making jest at the messengers of the true God and despising his words and mocking at his prophets, until the rage of Jehovah came up against his people, until there was no healing." But there were those who did respond unselfishly to Jehovah God's love. To see how they did so, let us now examine the lives of some of these individuals. This will lay the groundwork for showing how we ourselves may respond to Jehovah's love in very practical ways.

3. With what wondrous faculties has God endowed us?

4. What manifestations of God's love have humans experienced since the transgression of their first parents?

5. How did Jehovah show loving patience in dealing with the nation of Israel?

How Moses Responded Unselfishly

[6] Moses was an outstanding example of a person who responded unselfishly to God's love. What opportunities were set before Moses as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter! But he chose "to be ill-treated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin, because he esteemed the reproach of the Christ as riches greater than the treasures of Egypt." (Hebrews 11:25, 26) At one time, Moses wanted to deliver his brothers, the Israelites, from Egyptian bondage. But they did not appreciate his efforts, nor was it God's due time for their deliverance. (Acts 7: 23-29) Decades later, however, because of Moses' faith and unselfish desire to help his brothers, Jehovah empowered him to perform many miracles and to serve the Israelites for 40 years as His prophet, judge, lawgiver, and mediator. In these capacities, Moses experienced many instances of Jehovah's love for him and his fellow Israelites.

6. In what ways was Moses' example outstanding, and in what capacities did he experience God's love?

Jesus responded to God's love by helping others spiritually and physically and by giving his life as a ransom

[7] How did Moses respond to God's love and undeserved kindness? Did he 'accept Jehovah's undeserved kindness and miss its purpose'? (2 Corinthians 6:1) By no means! Moses unselfishly responded to Jehovah's expressions of love toward him by being wholly God-oriented. He looked to Jehovah at all times and had an intimate relationship with his Maker. How highly God spoke of Moses when rebuking Aaron and Miriam for criticizing their brother! Yes, Jehovah spoke "mouth to mouth" with Moses and let him behold "the appearance of Jehovah." (Numbers 12:6-8) In spite of Moses' many privileges, he continued to be the meekest of men and carried out Jehovah's commands "just so."—Exodus 40:16; Numbers 12:3.

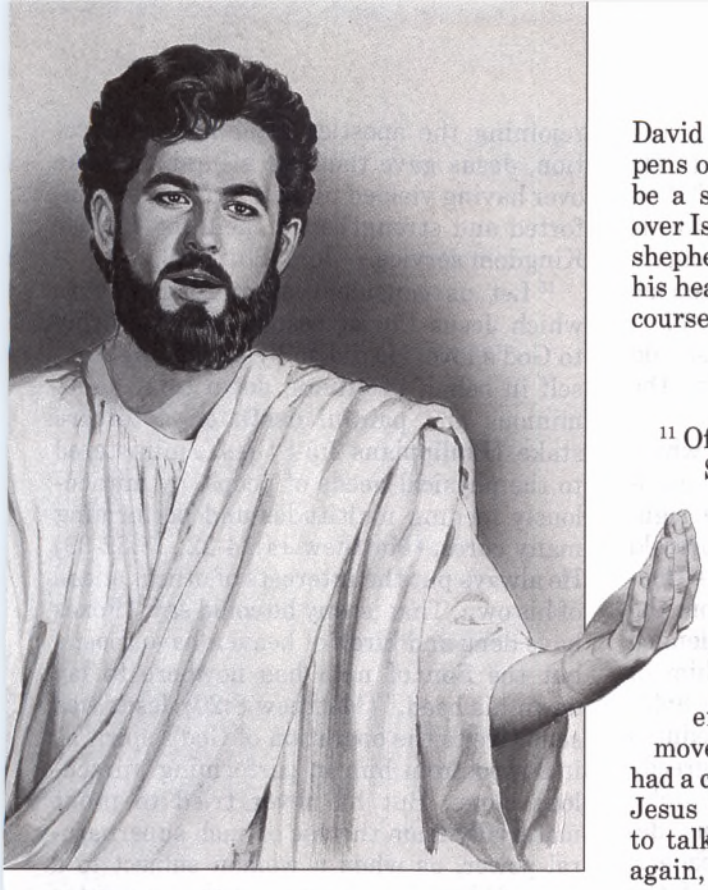
[8] Moses also showed that he was unselfishly God-oriented by the concern he showed for Jehovah's name, reputation, and pure worship. Thus, on two occasions Moses pleaded successfully with Jehovah to extend mercy to Israel because God's name was involved. (Exodus 32:11-14; Numbers 14:13-19) When the Israelites became involved in idolatrous calf worship, Moses demonstrated zeal for pure worship by calling out: "Who is on Jehovah's side? To me!" After that, Moses and those with him executed 3,000 of the idolaters. Then, for 40 years he put up with a complaining and rebellious people. There surely is no doubt that Moses responded unselfishly to expressions of God's love, setting a fine example for us today.—Exodus 32:26-28; Deuteronomy 34:7, 10-12.

7. How did Moses respond to expressions of God's love?
8. How did Moses show that he was truly God-oriented?

David's Fine Response

[9] Another outstanding Bible character who set a fine example of unselfishly responding to God's love was the psalmist David, the second king of Israel. His zeal for Jehovah's name motivated him to do battle with the taunting Philistine giant Goliath, over whom God granted David the victory. (1 Samuel 17:45-51) That same zeal impelled David to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 6:12-19) And was not David's desire to build Jehovah a temple another expression of his zeal and appreciation for God's love and goodness? Of course it was. Being denied that privilege did not deter David from preparing for the project and honoring Jehovah by

9. (a) How did David respond to Jehovah God's love? (b) Like David, how can we honor Jehovah with valuable things?



personally contributing gold, silver, and precious stones of very great value. (2 Samuel 7:1-13; 1 Chronicles 29:2-5) Similar unselfish response to God's love should motivate us to 'honor Jehovah with our valuable things' by using our material resources to further Kingdom interests. —Proverbs 3:9, 10; Matthew 6:33.

[10] Though David made serious mistakes, throughout his life he proved to be 'a man agreeable to Jehovah's heart.' (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22) His psalms are filled with expressions of appreciation for God's love. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopædia* says that David "abounded more and more with thankfulness than any other that is mentioned in Holy Scripture." The psalmist Asaph said that God "chose David his servant and took him from the pens of the flock. . . . He brought him in to be a shepherd over Jacob his people and over Israel his inheritance. And he began to shepherd them according to the integrity of his heart." (Psalm 78:70-72) Truly, David's course was one for us to imitate.

10. In what respect is David's course worthy of imitation?

Jesus Christ, Our Perfect Exemplar

[11] Of course, Jesus Christ is the finest Scriptural example of a man who responded unselfishly to God's love. What did this move Jesus to do? First of all, he was motivated to give Jehovah exclusive devotion. There is no question that Jesus was God-oriented through and through. Appreciation for his heavenly Father's love and goodness moved him to be a truly spiritual man. He had a close, intimate relationship with God. Jesus was a man of prayer, and he loved to talk to his heavenly Father. Time and again, we read that Christ was praying. On one occasion he spent a whole night in prayer. (Luke 3:21, 22; 6:12; 11:1; John 17:1-26) In response to God's love, Jesus lived the truth that 'man does not live on bread alone but on every utterance coming forth from Jehovah's mouth.' In fact, doing his Father's will was food for him. (Matthew 4:4; John 4:34) Should we not respond similarly to God's love, giving him exclusive devotion?

[12] Unselfishly responding to God's love, Jesus Christ always directed attention to his God and Father. When someone addressed Jesus as "Good Teacher," he objected and said: "Nobody is good, except one, God." (Luke 18:18, 19) Jesus repeatedly stressed that he could do nothing of his own initiative. He never missed an opportunity to magnify his Father's name, and he most

11, 12. How did Jesus show that he was truly God-oriented?

fittingly began his model prayer with the petition: "Let your name be sanctified." He prayed: "Father, glorify your name." And shortly before he died, Christ said to his Father: "I have glorified you on the earth, having finished the work you have given me to do." (Matthew 6:9; John 12:28; 17:4) Surely, in response to God's love, we should seek to glorify Jehovah, praying for the sanctification of his holy name.

[13] Now, please note a second way in which an unselfish response to God's love motivated Jesus. It caused him to love righteousness and hate wickedness, as foretold at Psalm 45:7. (Hebrews 1:9) He was "loyal, guileless, undefiled, separated from the sinners." (Hebrews 7:26) Jesus challenged his malicious opposers to convict him of sin, but they could not do so. (John 8:46) On two occasions, his hatred of wickedness caused him to cleanse the temple of greedy religionists. (Matthew 21:12, 13; John 2:13-17) And how scathingly Jesus denounced the hypocritical religious leaders, even telling them that they were of the Devil!—Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; 15:7-9; 23:13-32; John 8:44.

[14] Still another way in which Jehovah's love motivated Jesus can be seen in his dealings with his apostles and other disciples. How loving, patient, and long-suffering he was with them! They must have tried him sorely with their rivalry, arguing even down to the very night of his betrayal about who was the greatest. (Luke 22:24-27) Yet, Jesus always showed himself to be mild-tempered and lowly in heart. (Matthew 11:28-30) True, Judas betrayed Jesus, Peter denied him three times, and the other apostles fled when a mob came to arrest him. But he never became bitter or resentful. How do we know? Well, upon rejoining the apostles after his resurrection, Jesus gave them no stinging rebuke over having yielded to fear. Rather, he comforted and strengthened them for further Kingdom service.—John 20:19-23.

[15] Let us consider yet another way in which Jesus Christ responded unselfishly to God's love. He did so by sacrificing himself in behalf of others, down to an ignominious and painful death on a torture stake. (Philippians 2:5-8) Jesus ministered to the physical needs of people by miraculously feeding multitudes and performing many cures. (Matthew 14:14-22; 15:32-39) He always put the interests of others ahead of his own. That is why he could say: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." (Matthew 8:20) Jesus was sensitive to the operation of God's spirit as it flowed from him in performing miraculous cures. But he never tried to profit materially from the use of such supernatural power, as when a woman subject to a flow of blood for 12 years touched his outer garment in faith and was made well. (Mark 5:25-34) Moreover, Jesus never used supernatural powers in his own behalf.—Compare Matthew 4:2-4.

13. How did God's love prompt Jesus to act?
14. In response to Jehovah's love, how did Jesus deal with his disciples?
15. How did Jesus unselfishly minister to the physical needs of people?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ Why can it be said that "God is love"?
- ☐ How did Moses respond to manifestations of God's love?
- ☐ In what ways did David respond to Jehovah God's love?
- ☐ What example did Jesus Christ set in responding to the love of God?

[16] Although Jesus unselfishly attended to the physical needs of the people by healing their maladies and feeding them miraculously, the main motivation in his earthly ministry was to preach the good news of God's Kingdom, to teach, and to make disciples. In spite of all the marvelous cures he performed, he was not known as the Great Physician or Miracle Worker but as the Good Teacher. (Matthew 4:23, 24; Mark 10:17) Jesus referred to himself as the Teacher, as did his disciples and even his enemies. (Matthew 22:16; 26:18; Mark 9:38) And what truths he taught, as in his Sermon on the Mount! (Matthew 5:1–7:29) How apt his illustrations were, and how striking his prophetic parables and other prophecies! No wonder the soldiers sent to arrest Jesus on one occasion could not bring themselves to lay hold on him!—John 7:45, 46.

16. In what ways did Christ minister to the people's spiritual need?

[17] Unquestionably, Jesus Christ set us the perfect example of responding unselfishly to God's demonstrations of love toward us. Jesus gave his heavenly Father the first place in his life and affections. He truly loved righteousness, dealt lovingly with his apostles and other disciples, and spent his life ministering to the spiritual and material needs of people. Finally, Jesus crowned his ministry by giving his life as a ransom. (Matthew 20:28) But what about us? True, we are imperfect, like Moses and David. However, as the next article shows, there are practical ways in which we can imitate our Exemplar in responding unselfishly to manifestations of God's love.

17. (a) How did Jesus provide us the perfect pattern of love? (b) What will be discussed in the next article?

HOW CAN WE RESPOND UNSELFISHLY TO GOD'S LOVE?

"If this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another."—1 JOHN 4:11.

JEHOVAH is the very personification of love. Indeed, in the previous article, we saw how bountiful the manifestations of his love actually are. We also noted how Moses, David, and Jesus Christ responded unselfishly to those demonstrations of love. Should not each one of Jehovah's Witnesses want to do the same? Surely!

[2] What is required if we are to respond unselfishly to expressions of God's love? For one thing, we must give him the first place in our lives, loving him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Mark 12:29, 30) That means being God-oriented, having a warm personal relationship with Jehovah. Do we desire to talk to our heavenly Father in prayer? Are we praying incessantly and persevering in prayer? Or do we hurry through our prayers, at times even being too busy to pray? (Romans

1, 2. What is required for us to respond unselfishly to demonstrations of God's love?

12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17) Do we direct attention to Jehovah, giving him and his organization credit for what we may have accomplished? (1 Corinthians 3:7; 4:7) Indeed, do we feel as did the psalmist? Concerning God, he said: "Seven times in the day I have praised you."—Psalm 119:164.

[3] Whether we are responding unselfishly to God's love or not may well be revealed when we get together for a good time socially. Does our conversation then revolve around secular matters or spiritual things? It is not that we need to have a serious Bible study every time we get together with fellow Christians. But surely we can find some interesting things of a spiritual nature to include in our conversation. What about relating field experiences, discussing our favorite Bible text, telling how we learned the truth, or citing evidences of God's loving care and blessing?

[4] Another circumstance that may reveal the degree of our appreciation for God's love is when we are overlooked with respect to some privilege of service in Jehovah's organization. How do we react? If we are chiefly concerned with honoring Jehovah, we will agree that most likely God will be honored equally well by whoever has the particular privilege of service. (Compare Luke 9:48.) But if we are unduly concerned with our own advantage or name, we will be distressed that we have been overlooked, as we may think. We should remember that Jehovah loves us and may even know that at present we cannot carry the weight of a certain theocratic responsibility. He may be blessing us richly in other ways, and such manifestations of his love should help us to keep our spiritual balance.—Proverbs 10:22.

3. When we get together socially, how may we show that we are responding unselfishly to God's love?

4. How should we view matters if we are disappointed as regards some privilege of service?

Loving Righteousness, Hating Lawlessness

[5] Manifestations of God's love toward us should motivate us to imitate Christ in loving righteousness and hating lawlessness. (Hebrews 1:9) True, we cannot do this perfectly, as Jesus did. Yet, we can make it our goal to be as holy, honest, and lawabiding as possible in our imperfect condition. To do this, we must not only develop a love for righteous and good things but also cultivate a hatred, an aversion, a loathing, for what is wicked. As the apostle Paul expressed it: "Abhor what is wicked, cling to what is good." (Romans 12:9) "Abhor" is a very strong word, meaning "to regard with extreme repugnance."—*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary.*

[6] What will help us to guard against temptations thrust in our way by the world, our own sinful flesh, and the Devil? Loyalty to Jehovah God. He appeals to us: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me." (Proverbs 27:11) Yes, loyalty to Jehovah will motivate us to take the wise course of hating what he hates. Further, no matter how pleasurable or exciting the breaking of one of God's laws may seem to be, we must keep telling ourselves that doing so is just not worth it. (Galatians 6:7, 8) The human heart is treacherous, devious, deceitful, even as we are reminded at Jeremiah 17:9. The Christian heart likes good, beautiful, pure things. But at times sinful tendencies incline it to desire also what is bad. Like the hearts of the Israelites who worshiped Jehovah and yet kept their idolatrous "high places," so our own heart may be selfish and tricky. (1 Kings 22:43; Deuteronomy 12:2) Our imperfect heart may

5. Manifestations of God's love should have what effect on our conduct?

6. What will help us to guard against temptations put in our way by the world, our sinful flesh, and the Devil?

try to find excuses to put us in the way of temptation. It may try to minimize the seriousness of the wrongdoing with which we are tempted. Or our heart may try to convince us that any punishment will merely be temporary.

[7] Out of appreciation for God's love, we must guard against craving what is bad, such as leaning toward sexual immorality, whether we are single or married. Time and again, what started out as a seemingly harmless flirtation has resulted in two Christians' becoming so emotionally involved with each other that they have practiced sin and have been disfellowshipped. Even elders, who should be irreprehensible examples to the flock, have come to grief in these matters!—Compare 1 Kings 15:4, 5.

7. Why must we guard against craving what is bad?

[8] Consider the apostle Paul, who was blessed with supernatural visions and powers and with the gift of divine inspiration. To succeed in his struggle against sinful tendencies, he had to pummel—yes, severely beat—his body. Do we dare content ourselves with doing any less? (Romans 7: 15-25; 1 Corinthians 9:27) It is as though we were in a small rowboat on a swiftly flowing river and were being pulled toward its falls. To avert disaster, we must strenuously row upstream against the strong current. We may not seem to be making much progress, but as long as we keep exerting ourselves vigorously, we will not go over the falls to our destruction. Surely, manifestations of Jehovah God's love toward us should cause us to exert ourselves vigorously to be loyal to him by hating lawlessness and loving righteousness.

8. What warning example does the apostle Paul give us, and how may such a problem be illustrated?

We must struggle against sinful tendencies to avoid disaster

Display Brotherly Love

[9] The manifestations of God's love should also motivate us to love our brothers as Jesus Christ loves his disciples. (John 13:1) Most fittingly, the apostle John states: "The love is in this respect, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another." (1 John 4: 10, 11) In fact, Jesus said that the way his true followers can be identified is by the love they have among themselves.—John 13:34, 35.

[10] We know that Christians should show brotherly love. But it is not amiss to remind ourselves of the various ways in which we can show this Christlike love for one another. Such love will help us to ignore differences as regards race, nationality, education, culture, and economic level. Moreover, brotherly love will move us to come together in meetings. If we truly love our brothers, we will not let inclement weather or a slight physical indisposition deprive us of the joy of associating with them and sharing in an interchange of encouragement. (Romans 1:11, 12) More than that, brotherly love will make us prepare well for our meetings and take an active part in them so that we can incite one another to love and fine works.—Hebrews 10:23-25.

[11] What about helping our brothers in the field ministry? It has been observed that elders and ministerial servants often engage in the house-to-house ministry with one another or by themselves when they could, with a little planning, invite Kingdom publishers needing help in the ministry to accompany them. Showing love in this way will make the field service of elders and ministerial servants doubly rewarding. And what about taking a new publisher along on a home Bible study?—Romans 15:1, 2.

9. What counsel does the apostle John give as to loving our brothers?

10, 11. What are some of the ways in which we can demonstrate brotherly love?

Elders show brotherly love by accompanying others in the Kingdom ministry

[12] Love will also cause us to come to the aid of our brothers who may be in real material need. The apostle John wrote: "By this we have come to know love, because that one surrendered his soul for us; and we are under obligation to surrender our souls for our brothers. But whoever has this world's means for supporting life and beholds his brother having need and yet shuts the door of his tender compassions upon him, in what way does the love of God remain in him? Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:16-18) We may not now be asked to surrender our souls in

12. How are we to understand 1 John 3:16-18?

their behalf, but at times we do have opportunities to express love for them in other ways, not merely in word or with the tongue but also with deeds. There is nothing wrong with loving our brothers in word, but we do not want to limit our love to this when they are in need of material things. Jesus' statement that "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving" applies also to providing material help.—Acts 20:35.

[13] We have the opportunity to show love for our brothers who take the lead in the congregation or in connection with Jehovah's visible organization worldwide. This includes being loyal to "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) Let us face the fact that no matter how much Bible reading we have done, we would never have learned the truth on our own. We would not have discovered the truth regarding Jehovah, his purposes and attributes, the meaning and importance of his name, the Kingdom, Jesus' ransom, the difference between God's organization and Satan's, nor why God has permitted wickedness. It is just as the Watch Tower Society's first president, Charles Taze Russell, wrote in 1914: "Are we not a blessed, happy people? Is not our God faithful? If any one knows anything better, let him take it. If any of you ever find anything better, we hope you will tell us. We know of nothing better nor half as good as what we have found in the Word of God. . . . No tongue or pen can tell the peace, the joy and the blessing which a clear knowledge of the true God has brought into our heart and life. The Story of God's Wisdom, Justice, Power and Love fully satisfies the cravings of both our head and our heart. We are seeking no further. There is nothing more to be desired than to get this wonderful Story more clearly before our mind." (*The Watch Tower,* December 15, 1914, pages 377-8) How true those well-penned words!

Charles Taze Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Society, called attention to the peace, joy, and blessing that only God can provide

13. (a) What are some of the basic truths we learned with the help of Jehovah's visible organization? (b) What valid point did Charles Taze Russell make?

Ministering to Those on the Outside

[14] The expressions of God's love that we have enjoyed should motivate us to show neighbor love to those outside the congregation. How may we do this? Circumstances may indicate that we can help our neighbors in a material way. But, what is much more important, we can show neighbor love by bringing others the good news of God's Kingdom and assisting lovers of righteousness to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Do we regularly engage in this public ministry, or are we neglecting it? Has it become a

14. How should expressions of God's love motivate us to act toward those on the outside?

mere routine or token form of service? Or are we truly motivated by neighbor love? Do we manifest empathy? Are we patient, waiting for people to respond? Do we encourage householders to express themselves? Yes, instead of doing all the talking, let us allow love of neighbor to move us to listen and to have rewarding Bible discussions with people we meet in our ministry.

[15] Are we as alert as we might be to take advantage of opportunities to witness informally? It should be noted that this is not merely incidental witnessing, suggesting activity that is not planned or is of little importance. Informal witnessing is very important, and love for fellow humans will impel us to make opportunities to participate in it. How fruitful such witnessing often is! For instance, while attending a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in northern Italy, a brother went to a garage to get an automobile headlight replaced. While waiting, he witnessed to those around him and gave them handbills inviting them to the public Bible talk on Sunday. At an international convention in Rome a year later, a brother he did not recognize greeted him warmly. Who was this brother? Why, he was one of those men to whom he had given a handbill at the garage the year before! The man had gone to hear the public talk and had turned in his name for a Bible study. Now both he and his wife are dedicated Witnesses of Jehovah. There is no question that informal witnessing can be very rewarding!

Keep On Responding to God's Love

[16] Jehovah has truly been bounteous in manifesting love for his creatures. As we have noted, the Scriptures give us fine examples of those who have responded unselfishly to manifestations of God's love. Most fittingly, the inspired psalmist exclaimed: "O let people give thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness and for his wonderful works to the sons of men." (Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31) Dare we accept God's undeserved kindness and miss its purpose? Never may that happen! (2 Corinthians 6:1) So let each of us individually ask ourselves: 'Do I really appreciate expressions of God's love that I have already enjoyed and confidently hope to enjoy further in the future? Are they motivating me to love Jehovah with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength? Am I truly God-oriented? Do I love righteousness and hate lawlessness? Am I showing brotherly love? And how closely am I trying to walk in Jesus' footsteps as regards my ministry?'

[17] Truly, there are many ways to show our sincere gratitude for all the manifestations of God's love that we have experienced. By taking full advantage of opportunities to display such appreciation, we will make our heavenly Father's heart glad, be a blessing to others, and receive joy, peace, and contentment ourselves. May we therefore continue to respond unselfishly to manifestations of God's love.

15. (a) Why is "informal witnessing" a better term than "incidental witnessing"? (b) Why take advantage of opportunities to witness informally?

16. What questions may we do well to ask ourselves?

17. What will result if we respond unselfishly to manifestations of Jehovah God's love?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ What is required to respond unselfishly to God's love?
- ☐ How can we guard against temptations?
- ☐ What are some ways to show brotherly love?
- ☐ How should manifestations of Jehovah's love motivate us to act toward our neighbors?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Preaching the Good News in "the Most Distant Part of the Earth"

"THIS good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." So said Jesus to his disciples shortly before his death. Soon after his resurrection, he further said: "You will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth." (Matthew 24:14; Acts 1:8) Today, these prophecies are being fulfilled in more than 200 lands, including the South American country of Peru.

More than 32,000 Witnesses are preaching the good news in that beautiful land, and their territory certainly includes some of the most distant parts of the earth: the high Andes, reaching elevations between 14,000 and 15,000 feet, and also the hot Amazon jungle, where people can only be reached by riverboats. The Peru branch reports:

□ "In the jungle area, we have eight special pioneers assigned to two small riverboats called *lanchas*. These small boats draw only one foot of water, so it has been possible to extend the preaching of the good news into many new areas on the smaller rivers. So far, the brothers using these boats have placed hundreds of thousands of magazines, books, and Bibles all over the Peruvian Amazon Valley. As a direct result, four new congregations have been established, along with five isolated groups that report activity and hold meetings. It is hoped that these groups will soon become congregations."

□ One jungle town grew up around a pumping station for the Trans-Andean oil pipeline, which carries oil from the jungle over the high Andes as far as the west coast. Because of the presence of the oil pipeline workers, this town had some 20 bars and became known as a place for getting drunk and having a good time. However, after the special pioneers gave a thorough witness, many responded to the Kingdom message, and now only four bars are left in town! During a recent visit of the circuit overseer, 189 people came to the public talk. There is now a group of 7 publishers in the town, and more than 45 persons attend all the meetings. Soon, with Jehovah's blessing, it should become a congregation.

□ In one of the 221 congregations in Peru's capital city, Lima, a 29-year-old man tells how he got the truth. Having left school at age 13, he joined a gang of rowdies and began a career of fighting, taking drugs, and practicing immorality. After two years of compulsory military service, he started to have mental problems. Then, in 1983, a humble, unassuming sister contacted him in her house-to-house ministry. For the first time, he heard about the new world of love and peace. A Bible study was started, and with loving help from the congregation and in Jehovah's strength, he was able to overcome his vices. In 1986 he was baptized and now serves as a ministerial servant in the congregation.

Truly, Jesus' words that the Kingdom will be preached to the "most distant part of the earth" are being fulfilled in Peru with wonderful results, to the benefit of the many in that land who hunger and thirst for the truth.

HOW JEHOVAH PROSPERS HIS WORK

IN RECENT decades Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced phenomenal growth. In just the last ten years, they have expanded from 42,600 congregations to a total of 60,192 in 212 lands. In view of this, some have asked: How is the work of the Witnesses financed? The Watch Tower Society is pleased to answer this and related questions in this article.

Do Jehovah's Witnesses practice tithing?

No. In ancient Israel, tithing was commanded under the Mosaic Law in order to support God's temple workers, the Levites and the priests. (Numbers 18:21, 24-29) These had no tribal lands other than certain cities, so they needed this special support. In addition, faithful Israelites were free to give voluntary contributions for special projects, such as the construction of the tabernacle and, later, the temple.—Exodus 25:1-8; 1 Chronicles 29:3-7.

However, when Jesus died, the Bible says that "he abolished the . . . Law of commandments consisting in decrees." (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:13, 14) In other words, in God's eyes the Law was no longer binding on either Jews or Christians. Hence, along with other features of the Law, such as regular sacrifices at the temple, tithing was no longer required of the faithful.

Among Christians, giving is motivated by love, not law. The apostle Paul explained the principle when organizing a collection for needy Christians in Judea. He said: "Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) This Scriptural method of voluntary giving is practiced by Jehovah's Witnesses.

Do you resort to fund-raising dinners, collection envelopes, canvassing for funds, and similar ways of raising money?

No, true Christians do not have to be coerced or bribed into giving by having prizes dangled in front of them. Religious groups that resort to bingo, bazaars, raffles, carnivals, the renting of pews, or the passing of collection plates reveal that they have not given their people spiritual food, and so God's spirit does not move their parishioners freely to contribute funds. The same could be said of those who resort to the outdated practice of tithing.—Matthew 10:8.

How do you finance projects such as the construction of new Kingdom Halls and branch offices, as well as your expansion at the world headquarters in Brooklyn and at Patterson, New York?

Jehovah pours out his holy spirit upon his Witnesses, enabling them "to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share, safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life." (1 Timothy 6:18, 19) This spirit motivates Jehovah's Witnesses to support the Kingdom work in every way.

In 1989, for example, 3,787,188 Witnesses in 212 lands spent 835,426,538 hours in teaching God's Word to others. And they conducted 3,419,745 regular home Bible studies with interested persons. Any expenses incurred in this work were borne by the individuals doing it. Jehovah rewarded this labor of love with an increase of 263,855 newly baptized Witnesses.

A similar spirit of giving motivates Witnesses and interested persons to support the work in a financial way. Apart from helping defray the regular costs of their local congregation, they support any construction work that may become necessary, such as renovating or enlarging their King-

dom Hall or Assembly Hall or building a new one. Each year, because of rapid growth, a large number of Kingdom Halls have to be built, some even costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. The expense of these is borne by the local Witnesses through their voluntary contributions and labor.

Further, in many lands branch printing and office facilities as well as residence buildings have had to be extended—or new ones built—to accommodate the increased staff and facilities demanded by the growing organization. This too is supported by voluntary donations and labor, as are the building and renovation projects in Brooklyn and in Patterson, New York. Where possible, local Witnesses finance the construction. In some cases, the Watch Tower Society arranges for branches to receive help—both financial and in the form of skilled labor—from other lands. Thus, under the direction of the Society, "an equalizing" takes place.—2 Corinthians 8:14.

Why do you not operate hospitals or clinics and engage in relief work and other social services as many religious groups do?

Jehovah's Witnesses quickly respond to emergencies in the aftermath of war or natural disaster when they can. In fact, usually they are among the first on the scene with food, clothing, and volunteers to help with rebuilding. However, Jehovah's Witnesses do not operate hospitals or clinics, any more than they run fire departments or police forces, which are also for the preservation of life.

They are dedicated ministers of the gospel, and their assignment is to preach and teach the good news of God's Kingdom in all the world for a witness before the end comes. (Matthew 24:14) As Jesus said, the harvest is great and the workers are few. It would be unforgivable to neglect this all-important work in order to take up other activities, however praiseworthy.—Matthew 9:37, 38.

HOW SOME CONTRIBUTE TO THE KINGDOM WORK

☐ **GIFTS:** Voluntary donations of money may be sent directly to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or to the Society's local branch office. Property such as real estate, as well as jewelry or other valuables, can also be donated. A brief letter stating that such is an outright donation should accompany these contributions.

☐ **CONDITIONAL-DONATION ARRANGEMENT:** Money may be given to the Watch Tower Society to be held in trust, with the provision that in case of personal need, it will be returned to the donor.

☐ **INSURANCE:** The Watch Tower Society may be named as the beneficiary of a life-insurance policy or in a retirement/pension plan. The Society should be informed of any such arrangements.

☐ **TRUSTS:** Bank savings accounts can be placed *in trust for* the Society. If this is done, please inform the Society. Stocks, bonds, and property can also be donated under an arrangement to benefit the donor during his or her lifetime. This method eliminates the expense and uncertainties of probate of will, while ensuring that the Society receives the property in the event of death.

☐ **WILLS:** Property or money may be bequeathed to the Watch Tower Society by means of a legally executed will. A copy should be sent to the Society.

For more information and advice regarding such matters, write to the **Treasurer's Office, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201,** or to the Society's local branch office.

Part of the Bible educational center of Jehovah's Witnesses under construction at Patterson, New York

As it happens, a number of Jehovah's Witnesses are doctors, nurses, and hospital aides. But they view this work as additional to their primary vocation, the Christian ministry.

Do any of the Watch Tower Society's officers or members make money from your extensive printing activities?

Emphatically, no! By law, the Society is a nonprofit corporation. There are no stockholders, no dividends, not even salaries. Each minister at headquarters, including the Society's president and directors, has taken a legal vow of poverty. He receives food, shelter, and necessary medical care, as well as a small reimbursement of money for out-of-pocket expenses. If a Witness travels on Society business, his travel expenses are usually covered.

In addition, nowhere in the world do our ministers charge for performing weddings, baptisms, or funerals. And there are no admission charges or collections at public lectures or conventions.

Since collection plates are never passed, how do the local congregations receive contributions to meet their expenses?

Contribution boxes are kept in the Kingdom Halls so that individuals can make voluntary donations if they wish. (2 Kings 12:9) All donations, however big or small, are appreciated. (Mark 12:42-44) Once a month, the minister caring for the congregation accounts reads a brief statement to the congregation advising them of total contributions received, expenditures, and donations made by the congregation to the Watch Tower Society to support the worldwide preaching work and other projects.

When individuals understand this arrangement, they are free to take part if they so desire, each one "as he may be prospering." (1 Corinthians 16:2) This is the practice in each of the more than 60,000 congregations worldwide.

At Pentecost early Christians held all things in common. Do Jehovah's Witnesses do this?

An emergency situation arose following Pentecost 33 C.E. when Jews from distant places who had recently been converted to Christianity remained in Jerusalem to take in further spiritual enlightenment. They needed temporary housing and feeding; hence, local Christians conducted a voluntary sale of property and a common sharing of the proceeds to provide for an extended period of fellowship. (Acts 2:1, 38-47; 4:

Jehovah prospers the building work by his people who make voluntary donations

32-37) No one was forced to sell or donate. (Acts 5:1-4) This holding of things in common was not communism, as some suppose. It was merely a temporary arrangement. When the Christians went back to their own homes, it ceased.

Do you teach that material giving is a means of atoning for sin?

Far from it! The Bible says: "You know that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were delivered from your fruitless form of conduct received by tradition from your forefathers. But it was with precious blood, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, even Christ's." —1 Peter 1:18, 19.

Jehovah's Witnesses put faith in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus for salvation. They do not make voluntary contributions expecting that this will bring them salvation. Nevertheless, they know that considerable funds are needed to spread the good news of God's righteous new world. (2 Peter 3:13) And they feel that contributing toward this proclamation is a privilege granted by Jehovah.

When making a large contribution toward Jehovah's temple that his son Solomon was to build, King David prayed: "Yours, O Jehovah, are the greatness and the mightiness and the beauty and the excellency and the dignity; for everything in the heavens and in the earth is yours. . . . And yet, who am I and who are my people, that we should retain power to make voluntary offerings like this? For everything is from you, and out of your own hand we have given to you."—1 Chronicles 29:11, 14.

Today, Jehovah's Witnesses and other righteously inclined people feel the same way that David felt. They are happy to have the privilege of making contributions to support the work of praising Jehovah, recognizing that everything they give to his service comes from him anyway. Jehovah blesses this spirit, and this is how he prospers his work.

JEHOVAH HAS GIVEN ME STRENGTH

AS TOLD BY EKUMBA OKOKA

I WAS born into a "Christian" household in a Central African country, and I grew up with a love for God. My father was a zealous lay preacher, and I often went with him when he taught in church or in prayer sessions in private homes. Since I seemed to be a devoted young boy, other lay preachers chose me to serve alongside the priest at Mass. They even told me that some day I would likely study to become a priest myself.

At night, however, I was a leading singer and dancer in a local orchestra, the Matumba-Ngomo. In that capacity, I joined the young men and women of our district in all kinds of immorality. But I still looked forward to having just one wife and to going eventually to heaven to live with the "saints." I saw no need to clean up my life because, according to Catholic doctrine, all my sins were forgiven each Saturday evening at confession.

Difficulties Begin

In 1969, while I was studying at college, I began to feel pains in my joints. I did not know what caused them, but over the months that followed, they got worse. My

parents, despite being well-known Catholics, decided to take me to different fetishists, who said that someone had put a spell on me, but that thanks to their prayers and medicines, I would be healed. Nevertheless, I began to walk with a limp, and by 1970, I could hardly walk at all, even when leaning on a stick. At that point, I thought that my walking days would soon be over.

In February 1972 my father finally decided to take me to the hospital at Wembo Nyama. I was in the hospital for such a long time that they started to call me the owner! People would come to the hospital, be cured, leave, and then some time later come back with another problem, and I would still be there! My father had to go home for the rice harvest, but by now I was married, with two children, and my dear wife, although only 21 years old, looked after me and sought out a job so that she could care for our needs.

Nevertheless, I was very depressed about the whole situation. At 24 years of age, I was still getting worse, while my friends were doing well, many of them now having steady jobs. It seemed to me that it would be best for everyone if I would kill myself. Hence, I distributed everything I possessed to my children and my brothers, without telling them what I had in mind. I left myself with nothing but my favorite shirt that I wanted to be buried in.

Beginning of a New Life

Then one of Jehovah's Witnesses was assigned the bed next to mine. Although he was blind in one eye and in danger of losing the sight of the other one, he quickly began to witness to me from the Bible about Jehovah and the Kingdom. After a few days, he left the hospital, but he commended me to the care of some Witnesses who had visited him. After further discussions, these also had to leave, but one of them continued studying with me through correspondence. He also gave me various Bible study publications, which I read with much pleasure.

In this way I received spiritual food, and my depression gradually changed to happiness. It seemed that my church had been giving me "acid" to drink, but now I was freely receiving the water of life. I thanked Jehovah in my heart for freeing me from superstitious beliefs, such as the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, fear of the dead, and worship of ancestors.

By now I wanted to leave the hospital. Then I learned that two families of full-time ministers were going to be assigned to Wembo Nyama, so I decided to stay until their arrival. What happiness I felt when they finally came to find me in my hospital bed! Now I was able to continue my Bible study in person instead of through the mail.

After a few days, I asked them if they had meetings in a Kingdom Hall, as I had read in the magazines. They kindly told me that they conducted all their meetings in the little hut in which one of them lived. They also said they would be happy to bring me there on a bicycle! Despite severe pain in my spine and in all my joints, I joyfully attended all the meetings. When I met the qualifications, I was even able to submit a report each month as an unbaptized publisher, starting April 1974.

Three months later, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water immersion. I witnessed to the medical staff of the hospital, to the patients there, to the Protestant missionaries who came to visit, and to members of my family—despite the determined opposition of the latter. At this time, I witnessed while lying on my bed or riding in a wheelchair that the hospital made available to me until I could buy my own.

Endurance Brought Benefits

Despite the opposition of my family, I continued to walk in Jehovah's way and was richly blessed. My wife took her stand for the truth and was baptized in 1975. We decided to live in Katako-Kombe, where there was already an established congregation. My parents worried about us because someone had told them that all Witnesses would be killed in 1975. When we refused to give up our association, they stopped sending us food, and we fell into great material need. I remember that on one occasion my young son collapsed from hunger after we had gone a day and a half without food. But then our Christian brothers brought us fish and meal. Later, my parents started to help us again, but our brothers never stopped giving us material aid.

In February 1975 my right arm became paralyzed and started to waste away. But I kept my faith and was determined to continue serving Jehovah with joy. I am happy to say that my arm later got strong again, and I can still move it today, which enables me to open my Bible and use the Society's publications.

Courageous Before the Authorities

In 1977 the local commissioner accused me before the regional commission, which had just arrested a special pioneer in a nearby congregation. One day a soldier came for me with a summons. I prayed with my family, encouraged the congregation, and then went with him. Thanks to Jehovah's spirit, I was able to give a courageous answer to the charges, and after a long discussion with the civil and military authorities, I was released along with the special pioneer.

Some months later, I was summoned by another commissioner, and again, with Jehovah's help, I was able to defend the good news with joy and courage. I had a long discussion with this person, and at the end of it, he released me and personally pushed my wheelchair out of his office. Then he said quietly: "Come to my home this evening." After a number of visits, I was able to start a Bible study with him. Eventually, I had seven home Bible studies with different persons in authority. Most of them attended the congregation meetings organized locally.

Special Service

I asked Jehovah to help me, despite my sickness, to fulfill my vow to serve him with all my strength. Without officially enrolling, I tried to meet the requirements of an auxiliary pioneer. Jehovah helped me to succeed, so I filed an application for this service for the months of June to October. Then the Society accepted my application to be a regular pioneer, and I started this service in November 1976. In September 1977 my joy was complete when I received an assignment as special pioneer with the congregation at Katako-Kombe.

How was I able to accomplish this? I covered the territory in my wheelchair with the help of my dear wife and the brothers in the congregation. Sometimes I even went out alone on crutches. Once or twice I fell. Then I would just wait, immobile on the ground, until a passerby would help me get up and give me back my

In Our Next Issue

- **What Is the Truth About Bethlehem and Christmas?**
- **Encourage One Another as the Day Draws Near**
- **'Seeking Delightful Words, Correct Words'**

crutches. I always remembered the determination of the apostles and disciples of Jesus. (Acts 14:21, 22; Hebrews 10:35-39) Each time I fell, I prayed that Jehovah would not let me get discouraged but, rather, give me the strength to keep serving him. I kept in mind the marvelous promise recorded in the prophecy of Isaiah, that "the lame one will climb up just as a stag does."—Isaiah 35:6.

The more I increased my service, the more I was able to overcome my physical handicaps. In 1978 I had the privilege of attending the Kingdom Ministry School at Lubumbashi, which involved traveling a total of 1,200 miles by truck, boat, and train. Truly, for this trip Jehovah made full might abound in my case. (Isaiah 12:2; 40:29) Now I can even walk—with great difficulty—up to 300 feet without the aid of crutches. I am convinced that Jehovah heard my prayer back in 1973 to give me the strength to serve him with determination.

New Assignment

In 1984, after seven years in the congregation at Katako-Kombe, I received a new assignment to work with the congregation at Lodja-Centre. A year later we started a new book study 7 miles away, and soon we started another 20 miles from that one. This latter one was soon recognized as an isolated group and in 1988 was accepted as a congregation, where I presently serve as an elder.

Pioneering has been very good for me, both spiritually and physically. Out in the service, on my crutches, I was able to accomplish the exercises recommended by the doctors. I am much stronger now than when I started pioneering, and my desire is to endure in this work to the end. I am anxious to see how Jehovah will help me to "climb up just as a stag does" at a time when I will no longer have to endure the sharp pains of this illness.

With all my heart, I thank our heavenly Father, who has given me strength, courage, and the full-time service. I am now 36 years of age, and after 11 years in the pioneer work, I hope to continue, whatever the future may hold. I am determined to use all my vital force in honoring and praising the great God Jehovah.

Questions From Readers

■ **At Romans 8:27, the *New World Translation* renders the Greek *phro'ne·ma* as "meaning," but in verses 6 and 7, the rendering is "minding." Why is the same Greek word translated differently?**

The context recommends the two renderings chosen.

The Foreword of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* (1950) stated: "To each major word we have assigned one meaning and have held to that meaning as far as the context permitted." Some would not consider *phro'ne·ma* a major word, since it occurs only four times. It is, though, related to words that are used more often. One is *phro·ne'o,* meaning "to think, to be minded in a certain way." (Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33; Romans 8:5; 12:3; 15:5) Other related Greek words convey the idea of using practical wisdom, sense, or discretion.—Luke 1:17; 12:42; 16:8; Romans 11:25; Ephesians 1:8.

The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures shows that *phro'ne·ma* occurs four times at Romans 8:6, 7, 27 and that its literal meaning is consistently "minding." Greek scholars Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich explain *phro'ne·ma* as: 'way of thinking, mind(-set), aim, aspiration, striving.' —*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.*

In Romans chapter 8, the apostle Paul counseled Christians not to walk according to the imperfect human flesh. To succeed in this, they should guard against the tendencies or impulses of the flesh, as well as the reasonings of an imperfect heart. 'Setting their minds' on the things in accord with God's holy spirit will help in this.—Romans 8: 1-5.

Paul offered this contrast: "The minding of the flesh means death, but the minding of the spirit means life and peace; because the minding of the flesh means enmity with God, for it is not under subjection to the law of God." (Romans 8:6, 7) Humans are the subjects in these two verses. Humans, particularly Christians, ought not set their minds on, or be "minding," the things of the fallen flesh. Instead, they ought to set their minds on, or be "minding," the things that are in harmony with and stimulated by the spirit.

In contrast, verse 27 is dealing with God himself. We read: "Yet he [Jehovah] who searches the hearts knows what the meaning of the spirit is, because it is pleading in accord with God for holy ones." Yes, the "he" here is Jehovah, the Hearer of prayer.

The word *phro'ne·ma* could have been rendered in verse 27 as "minding." But holy spirit is not a person that actually thinks or has its own thinking. The spirit is the active force of God, who knows how his holy spirit works in accomplishing his will. Further, the import of this verse differs from that of Romans 8: 6, 7. Those earlier verses highlighted the need humans have to control their thinking and actions. But Jehovah does not have to work, or struggle, to control himself. He knows what was recorded in the Bible under inspiration, such as Biblical expressions that indicate his will for his earthly servants. Dr. Heinrich Meyer comments on Romans 8:27: "God would *in every case* know the purpose of the Spirit."

Hence, the rendering "meaning" is in line with the context or thrust of Romans 8:27, and it is allowed by the Greek. *The Translator's New Testament* renders it: "He who searches hearts knows what the Spirit means."

■ **Why does the *New World Translation* at times render the Greek word *pi·steu'o* as "believe" (like most translations) and at other times as "exercise [or put] faith in"?**

This is done to reflect different shades of meaning that are expressed by the Greek word *pi·steu'o.*

For example, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek,* by James Moulton, notes that early Christians clearly recognized "the importance of the difference between mere belief . . . and personal trust." Both these thoughts can be expressed using the Greek word *pi·steu'o.*

Often, the different shades of meaning of *pi·steu'o* must be discerned from the context. At times, though, different grammatical constructions help us to see what the writer had in mind. For example, if *pi·steu'o* is followed merely by a noun in the dative case, the *New World Translation* usually renders it simply as "believe"—unless the context indicates something different. (Matthew 21:25, 32; but see Romans 4:3.) If *pi·steu'o* is followed by the word *e·pi',* "on," it is generally rendered "believe on." (Matthew 27: 42; Acts 16:31) If it is followed by *eis,* "to," it is usually translated "exercise faith in."—John 12:36; 14:1.

This latter rendering (which reminds us that *pi·steu'o* is related to the Greek word *pi'stis,* "faith") is in harmony with a comment in *An Introductory Grammar of New Testament Greek,* by Paul Kaufman. This work says: "Another construction which is common in the New Testament (especially in John's Gospel) is πιστεύω [*pi·steu'o*] with εἰς [*eis*] and the accusative case . . . The whole construction of εἰς plus the accusative must be translated rather than attempting to translate the preposition εἰς as an isolated word. Faith is thought of as an activity, as something men do, i.e. putting faith *into* someone."

"Tears of Appreciation"

"CRYING tears of appreciation, I have just finished reading the article 'How to Help Depressed Ones Regain Joy.'" (*The Watchtower* March 15, 1990, pages 26-30) So began one of many letters of appreciation received by the Society for the articles on depression appearing in our March 1 and March 15, 1990, issues. This particular expression, however, came from a sister in Japan whose young son was recently afflicted with schizophrenia. She explains:

"Comforting and encouraging a depressed soul every day, at times I feel too exhausted to go on. When darkness sets in, my son is seized by fear and anxiety. So I give him sleeping pills and sit at his bedside rubbing his hands and putting my hand on his forehead until he goes to sleep. It is just like putting a baby to bed, and after about an hour, he finally falls into a deep sleep. That is when I feel relieved, but at the same time, I tell myself that tomorrow morning will bring another day to get through.

"My son says, 'I am no good for anything. There's no hope for me.' Every day he sadly asks, 'Will I be cured of my sickness? When will I be free of medicine? How long will this kind of life continue?' At such times I use questions to change his thinking as the magazines suggested, and this helps him to pick up to some extent. But we go over the same ground day in and day out.

"There are also times when my son calls elders [from the local congregation] in the middle of the night when he feels extremely anxious and asks them to pray for him. This seems to be of great comfort to him and puts his mind at rest. . . . Oftentimes, my son's condition worsens when my husband (an unbeliever) is away on business trips. When I ask for help over the phone, many brothers rush to our home.

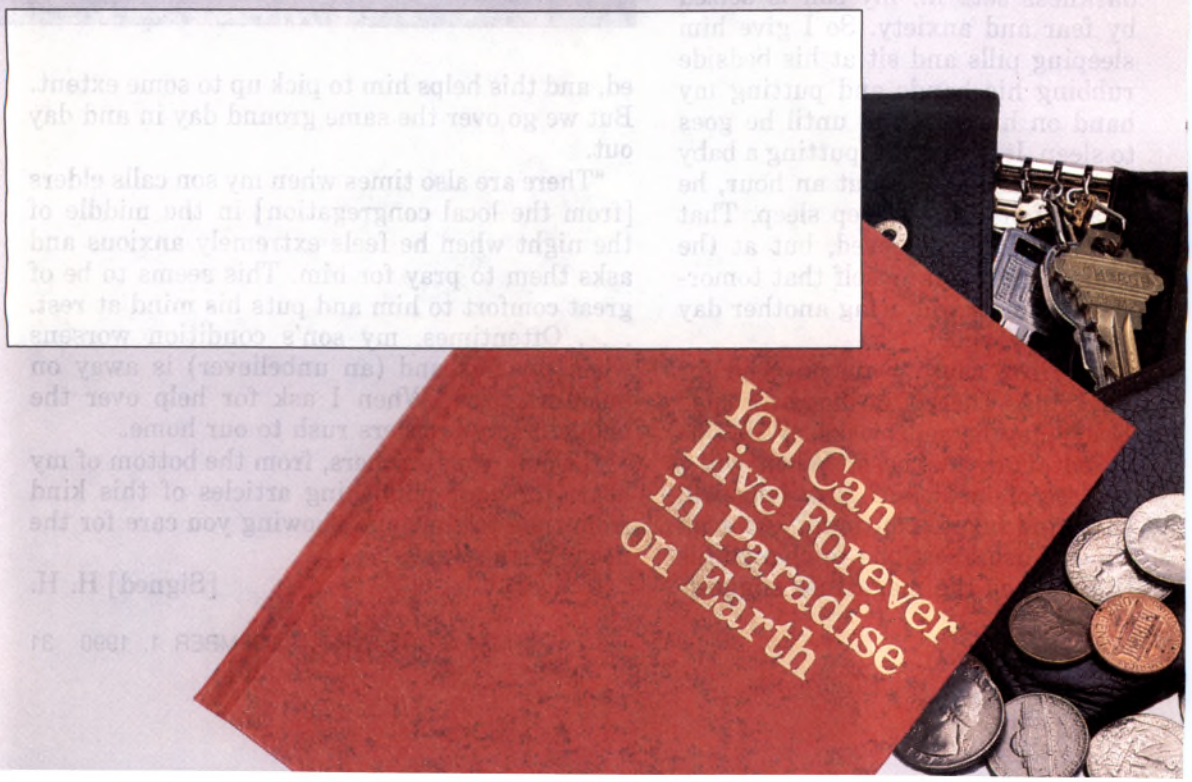
"I thank you, brothers, from the bottom of my heart for your publishing articles of this kind from time to time and showing you care for the needs of the weak."

[Signed] H. H.

This Book Changed Their Lives

Years ago a woman obtained a divorce from her husband. Eventually her son Steve became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Steve tried without success to talk with his mother about his beliefs. He also went to see his father, who was dying of cancer.

Instead of talking a lot, Steve simply left the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* beside his father's bed and said that reading it would help him. His father read the book and on his own began attending the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses in January 1988.

In the meantime, Steve's mother had opportunities at family gatherings to observe the new personality displayed by her ex-husband. This impressed her so much that she agreed to attend a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. She began attending meetings regularly, and soon she was sitting at them with her former husband. Eventually they remarried.

Steve's father died in September 1988 but not before he began sharing in the Christian ministry. Steve's mother, who cared for his father during the final months of his illness, was baptized in June 1988 and is now a zealous Witness.