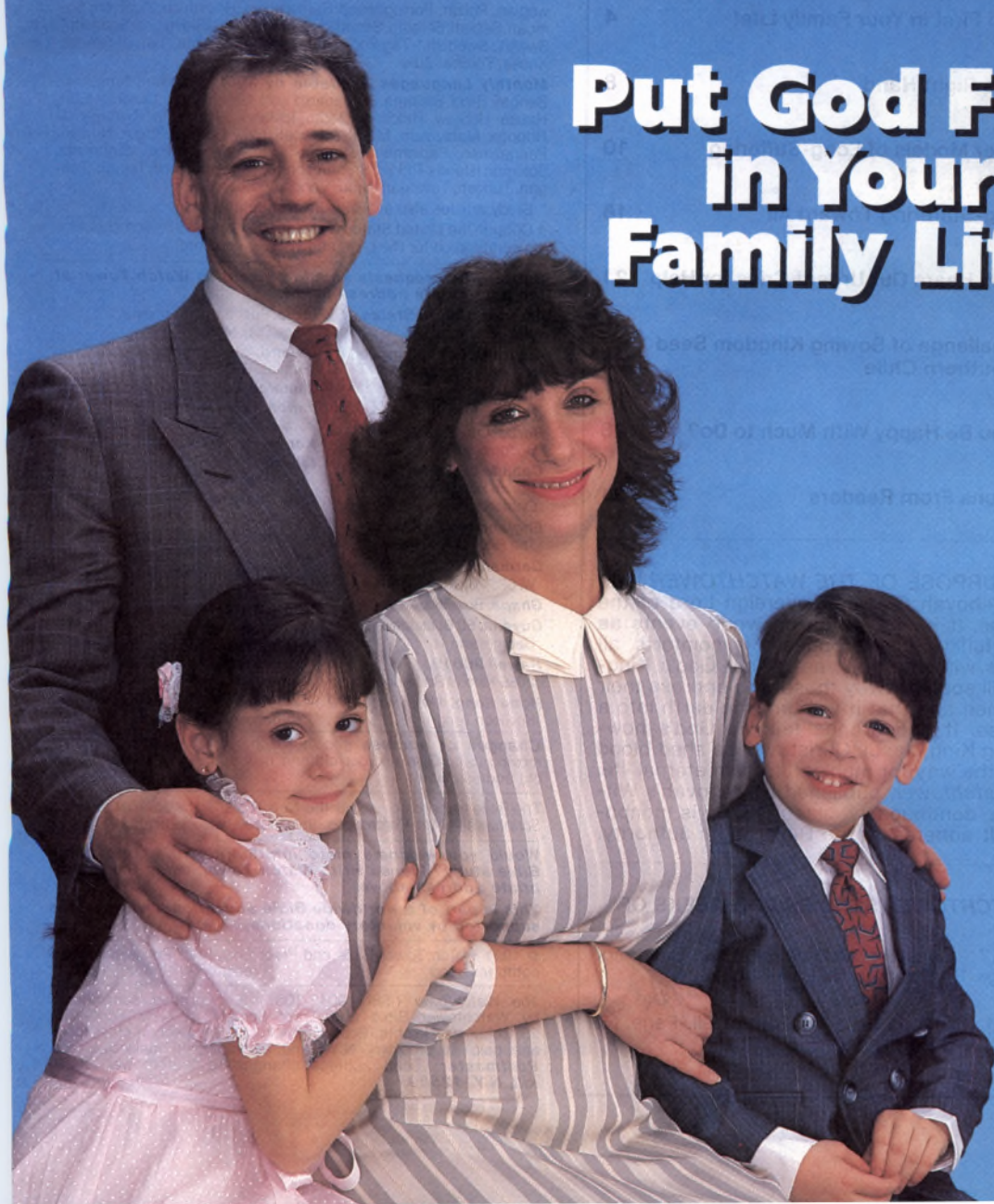


The Watchtower

May 15, 1991

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**Put God First
in Your
Family Life!**



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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these 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 God's 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.

WATCHTOWER STUDIES FOR WEEKS OF

June 17: Consider Models of Long-Suffering.
Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 165, 224.

June 24: Be Long-Suffering Toward All. Page 16.
Songs to Be Used: 145, 89.

Average Printing Each Issue: 15,290,000

Now Published in 111 Languages.

Semimonthly Languages Available by Mail: Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, Danish,* Dutch,* Efik, English* (also Braille and cassettes†), Estonian, Finnish,* French,* German,* Greek,* Hiligaynon, Hungarian, Igbo, Iloko, Italian,* Japanese,* Korean, Macedonian, Malagasy, Maltese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese,* Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,* Swahili, Swedish,* Tagalog, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Twi, Ukrainian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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This is part of a worldwide Bible educational work that is supported by voluntary donations.

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The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589. Printed in U.S.A.



WHAT CAUSES FAMILY DISTRESS?

'SHE is lazy!' Bob exclaimed. 'She is a terrible housekeeper!'

'That is just not true!' retorted Jean. 'He doesn't appreciate a thing I try to do. He is the most critical man I have ever met.'

What went wrong in the life of Bob and Jean?* Their fledgling marriage was only four months old, but it was already close to disaster. However, their case is not exceptional, for statistics show that marital discord is common. Experts now say that half of all new marriages in the United States will end in divorce. Similarly gloomy statistics come from many other countries. Yet, divorce is just part of the picture. In unprecedented numbers and for various reasons, families are in distress.

* Pseudonyms used to maintain confidentiality.

Some Reasons for Family Distress

Children are greatly affected when distressing circumstances exist in a family. *Newsweek* magazine reports: "One third of all children born in the past decade [in the United States] will probably live in a step-family before they are 18. One out of every four children today is being raised by a single parent. About 22 percent of children today were born out of wedlock; of those, about a third were born to a teenage mother."

Citing a related cause of family distress, child-abuse expert J. Patrick Gannon says: "Current surveys show that tens of millions of people grew up in dysfunctional [abnormally functioning] families where violence, incest, or emotional abuse caused by alcoholism was an everyday

reality." It is no surprise that many children exposed to such things may not know how to avoid family distress as adults.

Some observers might blame family distress on the economic, social, and moral changes that have swept over industrialized lands. For example, the large-scale entry of women into the work force has triggered an often disconcerting rearrangement of domestic roles and responsibilities. Mothers nervously hone rusty job skills, fathers reluctantly grapple with housework, and children tearfully adjust to life at day-care centers.

Many families are under intense pressure in lands around the globe. One working parent compared this to "living in a

constant state of emergency." It is no wonder that almost half of those polled during a recent Gallup survey said that the 'American family is worse off today than it was 10 years ago,' and few believed that the situation would improve.

Family distress is therefore a perennial topic of discussion on television and radio talk shows. The public devours self-help books on the family, some offering a measure of sound and practical advice. Although admonition to 'communicate more openly' or to 'share one's feelings' can be helpful, it falls short of coming to grips with the real cause of domestic problems. The next article will do so and will show how to deal with family distress.

PUT GOD FIRST IN YOUR FAMILY LIFE!

BOB AND JEAN—the married couple introduced in the previous article—did not get a divorce. Instead, they discussed their troubles with a Christian minister. He soon discerned that their difficulties basically resulted from their contrasting backgrounds.

For example, since Bob came from a family of tradesmen and blue-collar workers and performed manual labor himself, he wanted a hearty breakfast every morning. Jean, who came from a family of white-collar workers, served him only coffee and toast. So it was that a quarrel over breakfast escalated into all-out war!

Bob and Jean needed to improve their communication. However, the real cause of their distress went far deeper. "Do you view

each other in the light of 1 Corinthians 13:4?" asked the minister. That Bible text reads: "Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, does not get puffed up." The next verse says that love "does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury." Both Jean and Bob were willing to apply these words to their relationship.

The problems of this married couple required primarily a spiritual solution. Since Bob and Jean desired to maintain a good relationship with God, above all they needed to apply Bible principles and realize that "unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have worked hard on it." (Psalm 127:1) Verses 3

A capable wife is deeply appreciated

to 5 pertain to the building up of a family. And the greatest success in promoting domestic happiness comes from putting God first in family life.—Ephesians 3:14, 15.

What Putting God First Involves

Putting God first in your family life goes far beyond the saying, “The family that prays together stays together.” According to the journal *Family Relations*, many believe that “religion facilitates positive and healthy family interaction and enhances the life satisfaction of its members.” But just practicing a religion is not the same as putting God first. Many formally adhere to a religion simply because of habit, family tradition, or social advantage. God has little influence in their day-to-day life. More important, not all religion is “the form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God.”—James 1:27.

To put God first in our family life, we and our loved ones must worship Jehovah, “the Most High over all the earth,” according to his requirements. (Psalm 83:18) God’s Son, Jesus Christ, said: “The hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for, indeed, the Father is looking for such-like ones to worship him: God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth.” (John 4:23, 24) To worship Jehovah God “with spirit,” our sacred service to him must be prompted by a heart filled with love and faith. (Mark 12:28-31; Galatians 2:16) Worshipping Jehovah



with “truth” requires that we reject religious falsehoods and comply fully with his will as revealed in the Bible. We cannot put Jehovah God first unless our religion measures up to his standards.* What are some of these? And how can applying them benefit your family?

Putting God First as a Husband

At 1 Corinthians 11:3, the Bible says: “The head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God.” If you are a husband, you have the God-given responsibility to be the principal decision-maker in your family. But this does not give any husband license to be oppressive or dictatorial.

The Bible encourages husbands to consider the feelings of their wives when making decisions that affect them. (Compare

* See chapter 22 of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Genesis 21:9-14.) Indeed, the Scriptures urge all of us to 'keep an eye, not in personal interest upon just our own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.' (Philippians 2:2-4) Where no Bible principle is involved, a Christian husband will often yield to his wife's preference. Having personal interest in her, he will also make sure that she is not overburdened with responsibilities. For instance, he may help her with domestic chores, especially if she has a secular job.

The apostle Paul wrote: "Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it, as the Christ also does the congregation." (Ephesians 5:28, 29) Jesus Christ deals with members of the congregation in a loving manner.

Noteworthy too is the apostle Peter's counsel: "You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with [your wives] according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one, since you are also heirs with them of the undeserved favor of life, in order for your prayers not to be hindered." (1 Peter 3:7) Is it not sobering to realize that treating one's wife in an unloving way can hinder a husband's prayers? Yes, a man must deal with his wife in a loving manner if God is to hear and answer his prayers.

Putting God first also affects a father's relationship with his children. He should be deeply concerned about their spiritual welfare. Yet, in a major U.S. survey, only half of the men said that "participating in Scripture study or discussion groups" was 'most important in their family's spiritual development.' The rest cited such things as "watching or listening to broadcast religious services" or 'reflecting on the meaning of life.'

However, the Bible tells fathers: "Do not be irritating your children, but go on bring-

ing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) Among Jehovah's Witnesses, fathers are expected to take the lead in family worship. By regularly conducting family Bible studies, attending Christian meetings, and complying with other Scriptural requirements, such men put God first in family life.

Putting God First as a Wife

If you are a wife, you can put God first by supporting your husband in his role as family head. Says the Bible: "You wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as it is becoming in the Lord." (Colossians 3:18) This may be quite difficult if a man is noncommunicative or is lackadaisical about taking the lead in family worship. In any event, constantly spotlighting his flaws or, worse yet, defying him would only increase family stress.

Proverbs 14:1 says: "The truly wise woman has built up her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands." One way that a truly wise married woman can put God first and 'build up her house' is by being in subjection to her husband. (1 Corinthians 11:3) With 'the law of loving-kindness upon her tongue,' she avoids being unnecessarily critical of her husband. (Proverbs 31:26) She also works hard to make his decisions succeed.

Another way for a married woman to put God first is to be an industrious wife. Of course, if she must work secularly, she may have neither the time nor the energy needed to maintain her home as she desires. She can still strive to be like the "capable wife" of whom the Bible says: "She is watching over the goings-on of her household, and the bread of laziness she does not eat." —Proverbs 31:10, 27.

Above all, a wife needs to keep the worship of God first in her life. Many who visit



The Bible encourages husbands to take the lead in family worship

a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses for the first time comment on the neat appearance of the children. A wife's work in this regard is invaluable. But she must also work to maintain her spirituality by prayer, study, and service to God.

Putting God First as Youths

An article in *Adolescent Counselor* states: "Children have tended to develop attitudes and philosophies that have allowed them to take control of their parents. . . . Having been exposed to a society that emphasizes and glorifies immediate gratification and material wealth, adolescents develop an 'I want it now' attitude." If you are a youth, is that your attitude?

Colossians 3:20 says: "You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord." A young person who views such obedience as a di-

vine requirement will cooperate with his parents. For instance, he will not secretly defy them by associating with schoolmates of whom they disapprove; nor will he deviously try to manipulate either parent to get his own way. (Proverbs 3:32) Rather, any young person who puts God first in life will submit to loving parental guidance.

Keep God First!

No matter what place we have in the family circle, we need to put God first in life and cultivate a close relationship with him. Are you and your family doing that?

In these "last days," all of us face "critical times." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Nevertheless, it is possible to thrive spiritually and survive the end of this system of things. (Matthew 24:3-14) By acting in harmony with accurate Bible knowledge, you and your family can have the hope of eternal life on a paradise earth. (Luke 23:43; John 17:3; Revelation 21:3, 4) Yes, that can be so if you put God first in your family life.

At God's Right Hand

THE pouring out of holy spirit at Pentecost is evidence that Jesus has arrived back in heaven. The vision granted shortly afterward to the disciple Stephen also proves that He has arrived there. Just before being stoned for his faithful witnessing, Stephen exclaims: "Look! I behold the heavens opened up and the Son of man standing at God's right hand."

While at God's right hand, Jesus awaits the command from his Father: "Go subduing in the midst of your enemies." But in the meantime, until he takes action against his enemies, what does Jesus do? He rules, or reigns, over his anointed disciples, guiding them in their preaching activity and preparing them to become, by resurrection, associate kings with him in his Father's Kingdom.

For example, Jesus selects Saul (later better known by his Roman name, Paul) to spearhead the disciple-making work in other lands. Saul is zealous for God's Law, yet he is misguided by the Jewish religious leaders. As a result, not only does Saul approve of Stephen's murder but he goes to Damascus with authorization from the high priest Caiaphas to bring back to Jerusalem under arrest any men and women he finds there who are followers of Jesus. However, while Saul is en route, a bright light suddenly flashes around him and he falls to the ground.

"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" a voice from an invisible source asks. "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asks.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," comes the reply.

Saul, who has been blinded by the miraculous light, is told by Jesus to enter Damascus and await instructions. Then Jesus appears in a vision to Ananias, one



of his disciples. Regarding Saul, Jesus tells Ananias: "This man is a chosen vessel to me to bear my name to the nations as well as to kings and the sons of Israel."

Indeed, with Jesus' backing, Saul (known now as Paul) and other evangelizers have tremendous success in their work of preaching and teaching. In fact, about 25 years after Jesus' appearance to him on the road to Damascus, Paul writes that the "good news" has been "preached in all creation that is under heaven."

After the passing of many more years, Jesus provides a series of visions to his beloved apostle, John. By means of these visions that John describes in the Bible book of Revelation, he, in effect, lives to see Jesus return in Kingdom power. John says that "by inspiration" he was transported forward in time to "the Lord's day." What is this "day"?

A careful study of Bible prophecies, including Jesus' own prophecy regarding the last days, reveals that "the Lord's day" began in the history-making year 1914, yes, within this generation! So it was in 1914 that Jesus returned invisibly, without public fanfare and with only his faithful servants being aware of his return. In that year Jehovah gave Jesus the command to go subduing in the midst of his enemies!

Obedying his Father's order, Jesus cleansed the heavens of Satan and his demons, hurling them down to the earth. After seeing this occur in vision, John hears a heavenly voice proclaim: "Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ!" Yes, in 1914 Christ began ruling as King!

What good news this is for worshipers of Jehovah in heaven! They are urged:

"Be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them." But what is the situation for those on earth? "Woe for the earth and for the sea," the voice from heaven continues, "because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time."

We are in that short period of time right now. People are presently being separated either to enter God's new world or to suffer destruction. The truth is, your own destiny is now being determined by how you respond to the good news of God's Kingdom that is being preached earth wide under Christ's direction.

When the separating of people has been finished, Jesus Christ will serve as God's Agent to rid the earth of Satan's entire system of things and all those who support it. Jesus will accomplish this removal of all wickedness in the war that is called in the Bible Har-Magedon, or Armageddon. Afterward, Jesus, the greatest Person in the universe next to Jehovah God himself, will seize Satan and his demons and bind them for a thousand years in an "abyss," that is, a state of deathlike inactivity. **Acts 7:55-60; 8:1-3; 9:1-19; 16:6-10; Psalm 110:1, 2; Hebrews 10:12, 13; 1 Peter 3:22; Luke 22:28-30; Colossians 1:13, 23; Revelation 1:1, 10; 12:7-12; 16:14-16; 20:1-3; Matthew 24:14; 25:31-33.**

- ♦ After Jesus ascends to heaven, where is he located, and what does he await?
- ♦ Over whom does Jesus rule after ascending to heaven, and how is his rule manifest?
- ♦ When did "the Lord's day" begin, and what took place at its beginning?
- ♦ What separating work in progress today affects every one of us personally, and on what basis is the separating being done?
- ♦ When the separating work is finished, what events will follow?



CONSIDER MODELS OF LONG-SUFFERING

"God . . . tolerated with much long-suffering vessels of wrath made fit for destruction."—ROMANS 9:22.

JEHOVAH God, our Creator, gave us his inspired Word, the Holy Bible. It is to serve as 'a lamp to our foot and a light to our roadway.' (Psalm 119:105) God's Word also helps us to become "completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) One way it thus equips us is by giving us fine models of long-suffering. This quality is one of the fruits of God's spirit and is indispensable to our gaining his approval and getting along harmoni-

ously with fellow humans.—Galatians 5: 22, 23.

²The Greek word translated "long-suffering" literally means "longness of spirit." Long-suffering has been defined as "that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish." (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, by W. E. Vine, Volume 3, page 12) To be long-suffering means to

1. (a) How does God's inspired Word serve for our benefit? (b) In this connection, why is the quality of long-suffering here considered?

2. What is the meaning of the Greek word rendered "long-suffering," and who is foremost in displaying this quality?

exercise self-control and be slow to anger. And who is foremost among those slow to anger, displaying long-suffering? None other than Jehovah God. Thus, at Exodus 34:6, we read that Jehovah is “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth.” In fact, eight more times in the Scriptures, Jehovah is spoken of as being “slow to anger.”—Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:3.

³ Being long-suffering, or slow to anger, is just what we would expect of Jehovah God, for he is infinite in power and wisdom, perfect in justice, and the very embodiment of love. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Job 12:13; Isaiah 40:26; 1 John 4:8) He has control of his qualities, keeping them in perfect balance at all times. What does his Word reveal about why and how he has displayed long-suffering toward imperfect humans?

Long-Suffering for His Name's Sake

⁴ Why is Jehovah long-suffering? Why does he not immediately punish sinners? Not because of indifference or lack of zeal for righteousness. No, but for good reasons Jehovah is slow to anger and does not promptly punish people. One reason is so that his name may be made known. Another reason is that time was required to settle the issues of God's sovereignty and mankind's integrity, raised by the rebellion in Eden. Still another reason for God's long-suffering is that it gives erring ones the opportunity to mend their ways.

3. What qualities account for Jehovah's being long-suffering?

4. For what good reasons has God manifested long-suffering toward sinners?

⁵ Jehovah was long-suffering in dealing with the first human pair in the garden of Eden. When they violated his commandment against eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and bad, he could immediately have executed them and the fallen angel that had deceived Eve. There was no question that Jehovah's sense of righteousness and justice had been outraged, that he was angry with the three rebels. He would have been perfectly within his rights if he had executed them at once. God had warned the first man, Adam: “As for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die.” (Genesis 2:17) On the very day that Adam sinned, God called the transgressors to account and pronounced sentence of death. Judicially, Adam and Eve died that day. Yet, our long-suffering Creator let Adam live for 930 years.—Genesis 5:5.

⁶ God had good reasons for being long-suffering, or slow to anger, in this case. If he had executed those rebels at once, this would not have answered the Devil's implicit taunt that Jehovah God does not deserve to be worshiped and that he cannot have human servants who will keep their integrity to him regardless of circumstances. Moreover, such questions as these would have been left unanswered: Whose fault was it that Adam and Eve sinned? Did Jehovah first create them so morally weak that they could not resist temptation and then punish them for failing to do so? The answer to all of this is apparent from the account found in the book of Job, chapters 1 and 2. By permitting the human race to increase, Jehovah allowed humans to have opportunities to prove Satan's charges false.

5, 6. Why did Jehovah manifest long-suffering in connection with man's rebellion?

⁷ When Jehovah was about to deliver his people, the Israelites, from Egyptian bondage, he again proved to be long-suffering. Jehovah could have destroyed Pharaoh and his military forces at once. Instead of doing this, however, God tolerated them for a time. For what good reasons? Well, as time passed, Pharaoh became more stubborn in his refusal to let the Israelites leave Egypt as Jehovah's free people. He thus showed that he was a 'vessel of wrath' meriting destruction for defying Jehovah. (Romans 9:14-24) Yet, there was a greater reason why God was long-suffering in this case. Through Moses, he told Pharaoh: "By now I could have thrust my hand out that I might strike you and your people with pestilence and that you might be effaced from the earth. But, in fact, for this cause I have kept you in existence, for the sake of showing you my power and in order to have my name declared in all the earth." —Exodus 9:15, 16.

⁸ Jehovah's long-suffering was also displayed for good reasons when the Israelites were in the wilderness. How they tried God's patience by worshiping the golden calf and by failing to exercise faith when ten spies returned with a bad report! God did not wipe them out as his people since his name and reputation were involved. Yes, Jehovah manifested long-suffering for his name's sake. —Exodus 32:10-14; Numbers 14:11-20.

Long-Suffering for the Sake of Humans

⁹ Jehovah has been long-suffering for the sake of humankind ever since Adam

wronged all his potential offspring, doing them a great injustice by sinning. God's long-suffering made it possible for that wrong to be righted in that he allowed time for repentant humans to become reconciled to him. (Romans 5:8-10) Jehovah God also showed long-suffering toward humans in Noah's day. At that time, "Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time." (Genesis 6:5) Though God could have wiped out the human race as soon as he saw this condition, he decreed that he would bring an end to this situation in 120 years. (Genesis 6:3) This expression of long-suffering allowed time for Noah to have three sons, for them to grow up and get married, and for that family to build the ark for the saving of their souls and for the preservation of animal creation. In this way it was possible for God's original purpose for the earth to be realized.

¹⁰ Another definition of long-suffering especially applies to God's dealings with his people. It is "the patient endurance of wrong or provocation, combined with a refusal to give up hope for improvement in the disturbed relationship." (*Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 262; published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.) This points to an additional reason why God was long-suffering toward the Israelites. They repeatedly turned away from Jehovah and came into bondage to Gentile nations. Yet, he displayed long-suffering by delivering the Israelites and giving them opportunity to repent. —Judges 2:16-20.

¹¹ The majority of Israel's kings led their subjects into false worship. Did God cast the nation off at once? No, he did not quick-

10, 11. Why was Jehovah so long-suffering with the nation of Israel?

7. Why did Jehovah not execute Pharaoh at once?

8. For what reason did God not execute rebellious Israelites in the wilderness?

9. Why did Jehovah show long-suffering in the days of Noah?

**Jesus displayed
long-suffering toward
his disciples**

ly give up hope for improvement in the disturbed relationship. Instead, Jehovah was slow to anger. Displaying long-suffering, God repeatedly gave them opportunity to repent. 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."

¹² The Christian Greek Scriptures also provide evidence that Jehovah displays long-suffering to help his erring people. For instance, the apostle Paul asks transgressing Christians: "Do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, because you do not know that the kindly quality of God is trying to lead you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4) To the same effect are Peter's words: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Pe-

12. What testimony do the Christian Greek Scriptures give about why Jehovah is long-suffering?



ter 3:9) Most fittingly, we are told to "consider the patience of our Lord as salvation." (2 Peter 3:15) Thus, we see that Jehovah is long-suffering, not because of sentimentality or laxness, but because his name and purposes are involved and he is merciful and loving.

Jesus' Example of Long-Suffering

¹³ Second only to the example of long-suffering set by God is that of his Son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is a splendid example of self-restraint without hasty retaliation despite provocation.* That the

* To be long-suffering does not simply mean to suffer long. If a person suffering a long time was frustrated or bitter because of being unable to retaliate, he would not be long-suffering.

13. What Scriptural evidence is there that Jesus Christ was long-suffering?

Messiah would be long-suffering was foretold by the prophet Isaiah in these words: "He was hard pressed, and he was letting himself be afflicted; yet he would not open his mouth. He was being brought just like a sheep to the slaughtering; and like a ewe that before her shearers has become mute, he also would not open his mouth." (Isaiah 53:7) Testifying to the same truth is Peter's statement: "When he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return. When he was suffering, he did not go threatening, but kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteously." (1 Peter 2:23) How Jesus' disciples must have tried him with their repeated disputes over who was the greatest! Yet, how long-suffering and patient he was with them!—Mark 9:34; Luke 9:46; 22:24.

¹⁴ We should follow the example Jesus set in being long-suffering. Paul wrote: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus. For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Indeed, consider closely the one who has endured such

14. What should Jesus' example of being long-suffering move us to do?

In Our Next Issue

- **The Bible**
—Is It Really Holy?
- **Their Refuge—A Lie!**
- **Keep Warning of**
Jehovah's Unusual Work

contrary talk by sinners against their own interests, that you may not get tired and give out in your souls."—Hebrews 12:1-3.

¹⁵ That Jesus was long-suffering and endured trials willingly can be seen from the attitude he manifested at the time of his arrest. After rebuking Peter for having taken up the sword to protect his Master, Jesus said: "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father to supply me at this moment more than twelve legions of angels? In that case, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must take place this way?"—Matthew 26:51-54; John 18:10, 11.

Other Examples of Long-Suffering

¹⁶ Even imperfect, sinful humans can display long-suffering. The Hebrew Scriptures contain examples of the patient enduring of wrongs on the part of imperfect people. For instance, there is Joseph, the son of the Hebrew patriarch Jacob. How patiently he endured injustices inflicted on him by his half brothers and by Potiphar's wife! (Genesis 37:18-28; 39:1-20) Joseph did not allow these trials to make him bitter. This was evident when he told his brothers: "Do not feel hurt and do not be angry with yourselves because you sold me here; because for the preservation of life God has sent me ahead of you." (Genesis 45:4, 5) What a fine example of long-suffering was set by Joseph!

¹⁷ David is another example of a faithful servant of Jehovah who patiently endured wrongs, manifesting long-suffering. Pur-

15. How do we know that Jesus was long-suffering and endured trials willingly?

16. How do the Scriptures show that Jacob's son Joseph was long-suffering?

17, 18. What evidence of long-suffering do we have in the case of David?

sued like a dog by jealous King Saul, on two occasions David could have retaliated by killing him. (1 Samuel 24:1-22; 26:1-25) But David waited on God, as can be seen from his words to Abishai: "Jehovah himself will deal [Saul] a blow; or his day will come and he will have to die, or down into battle he will go, and he will certainly be swept away. It is unthinkable, on my part, from Jehovah's standpoint, to thrust my hand out against the anointed of Jehovah!" (1 Samuel 26:10, 11) Yes, David had it in his power to end his being hounded by Saul. Instead, David chose to be long-suffering.

¹⁸ Consider, too, what happened when King David was fleeing from his treacherous son Absalom. Shimei, a Benjamite of the house of Saul, threw stones at David and called down evil upon him, shouting: "Get out, get out, you bloodguilty man and good-for-nothing man!" Abishai wanted to have Shimei killed, but David refused to retaliate. Rather than doing that, he again manifested the quality of long-suffering.—2 Samuel 16:5-13.

Consider Paul's Example

¹⁹ In the Christian Greek Scriptures, we have another fine example of long-suffering on the part of an imperfect human—the apostle Paul. He displayed patient endurance, long-suffering, in connection both with his religious enemies and with individuals professing to be Christians. Yes, Paul manifested long-suffering though some in the congregation at Corinth said: "His letters are weighty and forceful, but his presence in person is weak and his speech contemptible."—2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:5, 6, 22-33.

²⁰ With good reason, therefore, Paul

19, 20. How did the apostle Paul show himself to be long-suffering?

told the Corinthians: "In every way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers, by the endurance of much, by tribulations, by cases of need, by difficulties, by beatings, by prisons, by disorders, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times without food, by purity, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by holy spirit, by love free from hypocrisy." (2 Corinthians 6:4-6) In a similar vein, the apostle could write to his fellow worker Timothy: "You have closely followed my teaching, my course of life, my purpose, my faith, my long-suffering, my love, my endurance, my persecutions, my sufferings, . . . and yet out of them all the Lord delivered me." (2 Timothy 3:10, 11) What a fine example the apostle Paul set for us in being long-suffering!

²¹ Clearly, the Scriptures abound with fine examples of long-suffering. Jehovah and his beloved Son are the prime examples. But how encouraging to note that this quality has been displayed by imperfect humans, such as Joseph, David, and the apostle Paul! The following article is designed to help us imitate such fine examples.

21. How may the following article help us?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What does it mean to be long-suffering?
- ☐ Jehovah has been long-suffering primarily for what reasons?
- ☐ In what ways did Jesus show himself to be long-suffering?
- ☐ What Scriptural proof is there that long-suffering can be displayed by imperfect humans?

BE LONG-SUFFERING TOWARD ALL

"We exhort you, brothers, admonish the disorderly, speak consolingly to the depressed souls, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all."

—1 THESSALONIANS 5:14.

WHAT an example Jehovah's modern-day Witnesses have furnished in being long-suffering! They have endured much hardship and persecution in former Nazi and Fascist lands and in countries such as Malawi up to the present time. Long-suffering, too, are those who live in religiously divided households.

² Despite the persecution and hardships they experience, Jehovah's dedicated people have been enjoying the blessings of a spiritual paradise. Indeed, the facts show that anointed Christians began to enjoy it in the year 1919. What accounts for this spiritual paradise? First of all, these paradisaic conditions exist among Jehovah's people because God has restored his anointed servants to their "land," or condition, of pure worship. (Isaiah 66:7, 8) The spiritual paradise flourishes also because everyone in it manifests the fruits of God's spirit. Long-suffering is one of these. (Galatians 5:22, 23) The importance of this quality as far as our spiritual paradise is concerned can be seen from this statement by scholar William Barclay: "There can be no such thing as a Christian fellowship without *makrothumia* [long-suffering]. . . . And the reason for that is

just this—that *makrothumia* is the great characteristic of God (Rom. 2:4; 9:22)." (A New Testament Wordbook, page 84) Yes, long-suffering is that important!

Being Long-Suffering With Our Brothers

³ The apostle Peter apparently had some difficulty manifesting long-suffering, for he once asked Jesus: "Lord, how many times is my brother to sin against me and am I to forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus counseled him: "I say to you, not, Up to seven times, but, Up to seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:21, 22) In other words, there is no limit to the number of times we are to put up with one another and forgive someone sinning against us. After all, we cannot imagine that anyone would keep count up to 77 times! Yet, being that forgiving surely calls for long-suffering.

⁴ When it comes to the manifesting of long-suffering by spiritual brothers, there is no question that congregation elders need to be exemplary. Their patience might be tried because certain fellow believers may be careless or indifferent. Others may be dallying when it comes to

1. Where and under what circumstances have Jehovah's Witnesses manifested long-suffering?

2. What two factors account for the spiritual paradise Jehovah's people enjoy?

3. What lesson about being long-suffering did Jesus give Peter?

4. Why do elders especially need to be long-suffering?

What counsel from Jesus helped Peter to be long-suffering?

correcting bad habits. Elders must be careful not to be easily annoyed or offended by the weaknesses of their Christian brothers and sisters. Instead, these spiritual shepherds need to remember the counsel: "We, though, who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those not strong, and not to be pleasing ourselves."—Romans 15:1.

⁵ Then again, personality conflicts may arise because of human weaknesses and shortcomings. Because of failings or idiosyncrasies, we rub our brothers the wrong way, so to speak, and they may do that to us. Therefore, how fitting the counsel: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also." (Colossians 3:13) "Putting up with one another" means being long-suffering, though we may have valid grounds for a complaint against someone. We must not retaliate or punish our brother, not even heave sighs against him.—James 5:9.

⁶ To the same effect is the counsel found at Romans 12:19: "Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.'" 'Yielding place to the wrath' means being slow to anger, or long-suffering. Manifesting

5. What are we able to put up with if we are long-suffering?

6. Why is being long-suffering the course of wisdom?



this quality is the course of wisdom, for it benefits us and others. If a problem has arisen, we ourselves feel better because by being long-suffering, we are not making matters worse. And the one toward whom we exercise long-suffering also feels better because we are not punishing him or retaliating in some way. No wonder Paul exhorted fellow Christians to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all"!—1 Thessalonians 5:14.

Within the Family Circle

⁷ It has well been said that a happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers. What does that mean? That happily married people are long-suffering in dealing with each other. Individuals are often

7. Why do married people need to be long-suffering?

attracted to each other because of their opposite temperaments. These differences may be intriguing, yet they may also be a source of friction that adds to stresses and anxieties already causing married Christians to have "tribulation in their flesh." (1 Corinthians 7:28) For instance, suppose a husband is indifferent to details or tends to be somewhat careless or sloppy. This may be quite trying to his wife. But if kindly worded suggestions are of no avail, she may just have to put up with his weaknesses by being long-suffering.

⁸ On the other hand, a wife may fuss over details and be prone to nag her husband. This may well call to mind the scripture: "Better to live on the roof than share the house with a nagging wife." (Proverbs 25:24, *Today's English Version*) In such a case, long-suffering is required to comply with Paul's counsel: "You husbands, keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them." (Colossians 3:19) It also takes long-suffering for husbands to heed the apostle Peter's counsel: "You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with [your wives] according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one, since you are also heirs with them of the undeserved favor of life, in order for your prayers not to be hindered." (1 Peter 3:7) The weaknesses of his wife may sometimes try a husband, but long-suffering will help him to put up with them.

⁹ Parents need to be long-suffering if they are to be successful in rearing their children. Youngsters may make the same mistakes over and over again. They may seem to be stubborn or slow to learn and may continually try their parents. Under such circumstances, Christian parents need to be slow to anger, not losing their

8. Why may husbands need to be long-suffering?
9. Why is long-suffering needed on the part of parents?

temper or composure but remaining calm while being firm for righteous principles. Fathers should remember that they too were young once and also made mistakes. They need to apply Paul's counsel: "You fathers, do not be exasperating your children, so that they do not become downhearted."—Colossians 3:21.

With Those on the Outside

¹⁰ Because of human imperfection and selfishness, unpleasant situations may arise at a Christian's place of work. It is the course of wisdom to be tactful and to put up with wrongs for the sake of peace. Showing how wise this can be is the experience of a Christian who was the victim of much disagreeableness caused by an envious fellow employee. Because the brother did not make an issue of this but was long-suffering, in time he was able to start a Bible study with the employee who had been troublesome.

¹¹ Especially do Jehovah's people need to be long-suffering when witnessing to those outside the Christian congregation. Time and again, Christians meet with rude or harsh responses. Would it be proper or wise to reply in kind? No, for that would not be manifesting long-suffering. The course of wisdom is to remember and to follow the wise proverb: "An answer, when mild, turns away rage, but a word causing pain makes anger to come up."—Proverbs 15:1.

Faith and Hope Aid in Displaying Long-Suffering

¹² What can help us to display long-suffering, to put up with grievous condi-

10. How should we act at our place of employment, as seen by what experience?

11. When do we especially need to be long-suffering, and why?

12, 13. What qualities will help us to be long-suffering?

tions? One thing is faith in God's promises. We must take God at his word. The Scriptures say: "No temptation has taken you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) In other words, as one old-timer put it: "If God permits it, I can take it." Yes, we can take it by being long-suffering.

¹³ Closely related to faith is hope in God's Kingdom. When it holds sway over the earth, all the evil conditions that cause us distress will be removed. In this regard, the psalmist David said: "Let anger alone and leave rage; do not show yourself heated up only to do evil. For evildoers themselves will be cut off, but those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth." (Psalm 37:8, 9) The sure hope that God will soon do away with all these troublesome circumstances helps us to be long-suffering.

¹⁴ How should we react if an unbelieving mate causes us distress? Keep looking to God for help, and keep hoping that the opposer will become a worshiper of Jehovah. The wife of one Christian sometimes refused to prepare his meals and clean his clothes. She used filthy language, would not talk with him for days, and even tried to have a spell cast upon him through witchcraft. "But," said he, "I turned each time to Jehovah in prayer, and I trusted Him to help me develop the good quality of long-suffering in order not to lose my Christian balance. I also hoped that one day her attitude of heart would change." After 20 years of such treatment, his wife began to change, and he said: "How grateful I am to Jehovah that he helped me

cultivate the fruit of the spirit, long-suffering, because I can now see the result: My wife has started to walk on the path of life!"

Prayer, Humility, and Love Will Help

¹⁵ Prayer is another great help in manifesting long-suffering. Paul urged: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) Remember also to heed the admonition: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter."—Psalm 55:22.

¹⁶ Humility is still another great help in cultivating the spirit's fruit of long-suffering. A proud person is impatient. He is easily offended, quickly gets angry, and will not stand for any unfavorable treatment. All of this is the opposite of being long-suffering. But a humble person will not take himself too seriously. He will wait on Jehovah, as David did when hunted by King Saul and insulted by the Benjamite Shimei. (1 Samuel 24:4-6; 2 Samuel 16:5-13) Thus, we should desire to walk "with complete lowliness of mind and mildness, with long-suffering, putting up with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2) Moreover, we should 'humble ourselves in the eyes of Jehovah.'—James 4:10.

¹⁷ Especially does unselfish love help us to be long-suffering. Indeed, "love is long-suffering," for it causes us to have the best interests of others at heart. (1 Corinthians 13:4) Love enables us to have

15. Why can prayer help us to be long-suffering?
16. In being long-suffering, how can humility help us?

17. Why will love help us to be long-suffering?

14. What experience shows why we should be long-suffering toward an unbelieving mate?

empathy, to put ourselves in the shoes of others, as it were. Moreover, love helps us to be long-suffering because "it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." (1 Corinthians 13:7, 8) Yes, as Kingdom song number 200 in the book *Sing Praises to Jehovah* puts it:

"Love has eyes to see the good.

Love builds up the brotherhood.

Love to erring ones is kind,

Seeks their better side to find."

Be Long-Suffering With Joy?

¹⁸ Paul prayed that his fellow believers in Colossae would be filled with the accurate knowledge of God's will in order for them to walk worthily of Jehovah, please him, and bear fruit in every good work. They would thus be "made powerful with all power to the extent of his glorious might so as to endure fully and be long-suffering with joy." (Colossians 1:9-11) Still, how can someone be "long-suffering with joy"? That is not contradictory, for having the joy mentioned in the Scriptures is not simply a matter of being lighthearted or cheerful. The spirit's fruit of joy includes a feeling of deep satisfaction over doing the right thing before God. It is also an expression of the hope of receiving a promised reward as a result of exercising long-suffering. That is why Jesus said: "Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens; for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you."—Matthew 5:11, 12.

¹⁹ Jesus had such joy. Indeed, "for the joy that was set before him he endured a

torture stake, despising shame." (Hebrews 12:2) That joy enabled Jesus to be long-suffering. Similarly, consider what happened when the apostles were flogged and ordered to "stop speaking upon the basis of Jesus' name." They "went their way from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name. And every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." (Acts 5:40-42) What a fine example proving that Christ's followers can be long-suffering with joy!

²⁰ God's Word surely gives wise counsel when it exhorts us not to retaliate, to be slow to anger while hoping for the best—yes, to be long-suffering! We need regular prayer and this fruit of God's spirit to get along with our brothers and sisters in the congregation, with those in our family circle, with people at our place of work, and with individuals we meet in the Christian ministry. And what can help us to manifest long-suffering? Faith, hope, humility, joy, and love. Truly, with such qualities we can be long-suffering toward all.

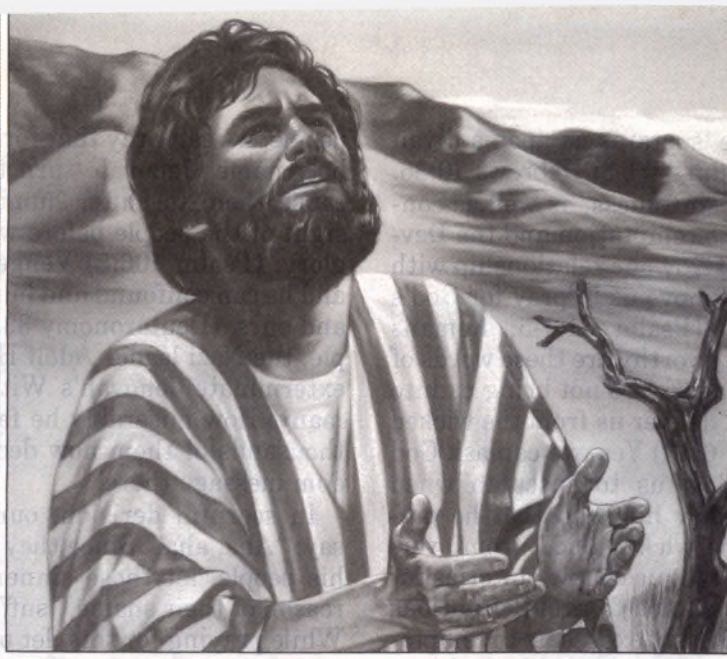
20. If we display long-suffering, how can this affect our relationship with others?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ Why is long-suffering essential to our sharing in a spiritual paradise?
- ☐ Why do elders especially need to be long-suffering?
- ☐ Why should long-suffering be cultivated by husbands and wives?
- ☐ What other qualities will help us to be long-suffering?

18. How is it possible to be long-suffering with joy?

19. What examples show that it is possible to be both long-suffering and joyful?



JEHOVAH HEARS OUR URGENT CRIES FOR HELP

HELP was urgently needed. That was evident from the great sadness of face of the king's cupbearer. Asked what was wrong, the cupbearer voiced his sorrow over the devastated state of Jerusalem and its walls. Then came the question: 'What are you seeking to secure?' "At once I prayed to the God of the heavens," cupbearer Nehemiah later wrote. That was a quick, silent, urgent cry for Jehovah's help. And the result? Why, Persian king Artaxerxes promptly authorized Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls!—Nehemiah 2:1-6.

Yes, God hears the urgent pleas of those who love him. (Psalm 65:2) So if a trial seems greater than you can bear, you might pray as the psalmist David did in Psalm 70, when he was in immediate need of divine help. The superscription to this

psalm shows that its purpose is "to bring to remembrance." With slight changes, it repeats Psalm 40:13-17. But how can the 70th Psalm help us as Jehovah's people?

Plea for Prompt Deliverance

David begins with the plea: "**O God, to deliver me, O Jehovah, to my assistance do make haste.**" (Psalm 70:1) When in distress, we can pray that God quickly come to our assistance. Jehovah does not try us with evil things, and he "knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial." (2 Peter 2:9; James 1:13) But what if he permits a trial to continue, perhaps to teach us something? Then we can ask him for wisdom to deal with it. If we ask in faith, he grants us wisdom. (James 1:5-8) God also gives us the strength needed to endure our trials.

For instance, he 'sustains us upon a divan of illness.'—Psalm 41:1-3; Hebrews 10:36.

Our inherent sinfulness, as well as constant exposure to temptation and the Devil's efforts to destroy our relationship with Jehovah, should move us to pray for God's help each day. (Psalm 51:1-5; Romans 5:12; 12:12) Noteworthy are these words of Jesus' model prayer: "Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one." (Matthew 6:13) Yes, we can ask God that he not allow us to succumb when tempted to disobey him and that he prevent Satan, "the wicked one," from overreaching us. But let us couple our cries for deliverance with steps to avoid situations that would needlessly expose us to temptation and Satan's snares.—2 Corinthians 2:11.

Those Saying, "Aha!"

We may be sorely tried because foes reproach us for the faith we exercise. If that should happen to you, reflect on David's words: **"May those be ashamed and abashed who are seeking my soul. May those turn back and be humiliated who are taking delight in my calamity. May those go back by reason of their shame who are saying: 'Aha, aha!'"** (Psalm 70:2, 3) David's enemies wanted to see him dead; they were 'seeking his soul,' or life. Instead of trying to retaliate, however, he exercised faith that God would put them to shame. David prayed that his foes might be "ashamed and abashed"—embarrassed, baffled, disconcerted, frustrated in trying to carry out their wicked schemes. Yes, let those seeking his injury and finding delight in his calamity become confused and experience dishonor.

If we had what might be called malicious joy when calamity befell a foe, we would have to render an account to Jehovah for our sin. (Proverbs 17:5; 24:17, 18) However, when enemies reproach God and his

people, we can pray that for the sake of his holy name, Jehovah 'turn them back and cause them to suffer humiliation' in the sight of the people before whom they seek glory. (Psalm 106:8) Vengeance is God's, and he can confound and humiliate his foes and ours. (Deuteronomy 32:35) For example, the Nazi leader Adolf Hitler sought to exterminate Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany. How miserably he failed, for many thousands of them now declare the Kingdom message there!

In scornful derision, our enemies may say: "Aha, aha!" Since they taunt God and his people, let those sinners "go back by reason of their shame," suffering disgrace. While praying for this, let us maintain our integrity and make Jehovah's heart rejoice, that he may make a reply to Satan and anyone else taunting Him. (Proverbs 27:11) And never should we fear our haughty foes, for "he that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected." (Proverbs 29:25) Proud Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who had taken God's people captive, experienced disgrace and had to admit that 'the King of the heavens is able to humiliate those walking in pride.'—Daniel 4:37.

"God Be Magnified!"

Though foes may cause us trouble, let us always extol Jehovah along with fellow worshipers. Instead of allowing himself to be so swallowed up by distress that he failed to magnify God, David said: **"May those exult and rejoice in you, all of whom are seeking you, and may they say constantly: 'God be magnified!'—those loving your salvation."** (Psalm 70:4) Jehovah's people continue to be very joyful because they "exult and rejoice" in him. As his dedicated, baptized Witnesses, they have the great joy resulting from an intimate relationship with him. (Psalm 25:14) Yet, they may be viewed as humble seekers for God. Being believers keeping

God's commandments, they continually seek further knowledge of him and his Word.—Ecclesiastes 3:11; 12:13, 14; Isaiah 54:13.

As Jehovah's Witnesses proclaim the good news, in effect they constantly say: "God be magnified!" They extol Jehovah, holding him in the highest esteem. Joyfully, they help truth-seekers to learn about God and also to glorify him. Unlike worldly lovers of pleasure, Jehovah's people 'love his salvation.' (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Conscious of their inherent sinfulness, they are deeply grateful for Jehovah God's loving provision for salvation to eternal life, made possible through the propitiatory sacrifice of his dear Son, Jesus Christ. (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 2:1, 2) Are you magnifying God and showing that you 'love his salvation' by practicing true worship to his praise?—John 4:23, 24.

Trust the Provider of Escape

When David expressed himself in this psalm, he felt such a desperate need that he said: **"But I am afflicted and poor. O God, do act quickly for me. You are my help and the Provider of escape for me. O Jehovah, do not be too late."** (Psalm 70:5) Afflicted with the trials that beset believers—such tribulations as persecution, temptations, and assaults by Satan—we may seem "poor." Though we may not be destitute, we seem defenseless against unscrupulous enemies. However, we can be confident that Jehovah can and will rescue us as his faithful servants.—Psalm 9:17-20.

Jehovah is "the Provider of escape" when we need it. Our own shortcomings may have brought us into a trialsome situation. But if 'our foolishness has distorted our way,' let our heart not 'become enraged against Jehovah.' (Proverbs 19:3) He is not to blame, and he is ready to help us if we pray to him in faith. (Psalm 37:5) What if

we are struggling to avoid sin? Then let us be specific about this in prayer, asking for divine help to continue pursuing a righteous course. (Matthew 5:6; Romans 7:21-25) God will answer our heartfelt prayer, and we will prosper spiritually if we submit to the direction of his holy spirit.—Psalm 51:17; Ephesians 4:30.

When in the throes of a test of faith, we may feel that we cannot endure much longer. Since our sinful flesh is weak, it may yearn for speedy rescue. (Mark 14:38) So we may plead: "O Jehovah, do not be too late." Especially if we are concerned about reproach upon God's name, we may be moved to pray as did the prophet Daniel: "O Jehovah, do hear. O Jehovah, do forgive. O Jehovah, do pay attention and act. Do not delay, for your own sake, O my God, for your own name has been called . . . upon your people." (Daniel 9:19) We can have faith that our heavenly Father will not be too late, for the apostle Paul gave this assurance: "Let us . . . approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time."—Hebrews 4:16.

Never forget that Jehovah is the Provider of escape. As his servants, it will do us good to remember this and the prayerful sentiments of Psalm 70. At times we may need to pray repeatedly about a matter of deep concern. (1 Thessalonians 5:17) There may seem to be no solution to a particular problem, no way out of our dilemma. But our loving heavenly Father will strengthen us and will not permit us to be tested beyond what we can bear. Therefore, never tire of going before the throne of the King Eternal in heartfelt prayer. (1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:6, 7, 13; Revelation 15:3) Pray in faith, and trust him implicitly, for Jehovah hears our urgent cries for help.

THE CHALLENGE OF SOWING KINGDOM SEED IN SOUTHERN CHILE

HOW delightful it is to walk along a quiet country road in southern Chile! Cattle peacefully graze in tree-lined fields against a backdrop of majestic snowcapped volcanoes. You can hear birds chirping and leaves rustling in the breeze. As idyllic as such surroundings seem to be, there are challenges here for those sowing seeds of Kingdom truth.

Would you like to meet some of our pioneers, or full-time Kingdom proclaimers? How about spending a day or two with them as they preach the good news? First, let's listen as Jaime and Oscar describe the delights and challenges of such a day in southern Chile.

A Day in the Preaching Work

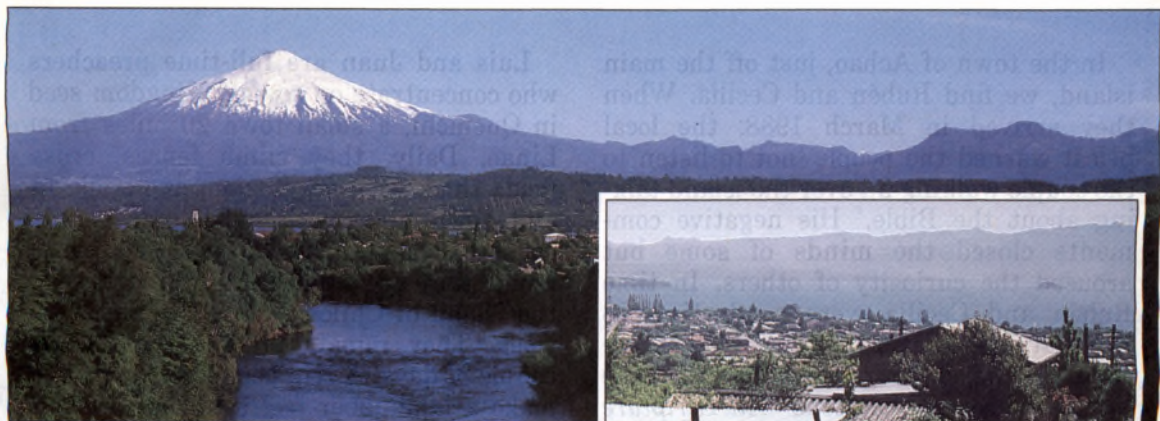
"We start to stir and become aware of the cold that has penetrated our small dwelling. Wearing woolen socks and with a cap still on his head, Oscar climbs out of bed. He kindles the wood stove, lights the small gas heater to take the chill out of the room, and then heads back to the warmth of his bed. It is still dark outside, and we can hear the rain that has been falling all night long. We look out the window and then at each other. Oh, how easy it would be to take this day off! Then we recall our plans for the day and the need to work an isolated territory that was not reached at all last year. We are motivated to get started.

"On our way before eight o'clock, we walk at a brisk pace and hope that someone will offer us a ride or that a bus will

come along, so that we can hasten our trip to the back roads leading to the isolated homes and hamlets of our territory. Here comes a tractor pulling a flatbed trailer with some workers on it. The driver stops and allows us to climb aboard. We are happy that, thanks to last night's rain, today we are spared the usual experience of traveling in a cloud of dust. As we bounce along, we share the good news with the agricultural workers. When it is time to get off, we give them a few magazines. How grateful we are for the ride that has saved us a seven-mile walk!

"It will be a long day as we crisscross the countryside in search of deserving ones. When we first started in our assignment, we could not understand why people would agree with what we were saying but seemed reluctant to accept Bible literature. We learned that often this was because they could not read. So we find it beneficial to point out that our literature is a wonderful gift for their children and relatives, who in turn can share the contents with them. Most of those to whom we talk do not have much in the way of this world's goods. But since they are happy to share what they have, when they have received Bible literature, they have often given us eggs, potatoes, beets, onions, beans, lentils, and garbanzos."





Jaime has learned to make suggestions when a householder wants to donate items for Bible literature he is given. Why? On one occasion, the pioneers returned with 30 pounds of vegetables, and his partner had to carry a live chicken in his book bag a good part of the day! Jaime often suggests *merquén*, a delicious seasoning prepared with chili peppers and spices. The account continues:

"Crossing the fields, we come upon some *rucas* [homes] of the native Mapuche [meaning, "People of this land"]. It is difficult to talk with the older Mapuche, for many speak only their native language. When younger ones are nearby, they often serve as translators. As we move deeper into the countryside, we meet people who have never seen a Bible or visited a large city like Temuco, capital of the region. This presents the challenge of helping them to discern how world conditions are deteriorating. We must do this step-by-step, showing them how local problems reflect what is happening elsewhere.

"As the day advances, our tired legs demand a rest. The weather has alternated between brilliant sunshine and a driving rain that makes an umbrella useless. Recently plowed fields have left our boots caked with mud. When we hear the words *Pase no más* (Come on in), we gratefully



step into the kitchen and enjoy the warmth of a wood stove, a cup of 'coffee' brewed from cereals, some cottage cheese, and fresh homemade bread. Ah, that luscious smell of fresh bread!

"With renewed energy, we continue into early evening, crossing fields rarely separated by fences, though you will find some wheat fields bordered by a shrub called *pica-pica*, an evergreen broom with yellow flowers. Since the sun will soon disappear and we must reach another main road to catch the last bus back to town, our walk of 12 miles will shortly come to a close.

"We return safe and sound, tired but happy, for we have had many delightful conversations with sheeplike ones. After a bite to eat, we review the day and then drag our tired bodies into bed."

A Visit to Chiloé

The archipelago of Chiloé is composed of a number of small islands. Its main island is 110 miles long and has verdant hills separated by small lakes. And what fetching seaside scenes and quaint fishing villages can be seen wherever you go!

In the town of Achao, just off the main island, we find Rubén and Cecilia. When they arrived in March 1988, the local priest warned the people 'not to listen to the couple walking all over the island talking about the Bible.' His negative comments closed the minds of some but aroused the curiosity of others. In time Rubén and Cecilia were conducting 28 Bible studies. Several of the studies are with teachers, four of whom use the Watch Tower publications *"All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial"* and *My Book of Bible Stories* to teach religion classes in their schools.

Jehovah cares for these hardworking pioneers, who walk up to 20 miles a day in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) One day, Rubén and Cecilia were walking along a path that bordered a beach when they noticed that at low tide an abundance of *choritos* (a kind of mussel) were within easy reach. Rubén began his harvest, but how would they get them home? Cecilia solved that problem. Her stockings became bags. The pioneers now had the makings of a delicious seafood meal!

Just north of Achao, two full-time Kingdom preachers known as special pioneers are associated with a small congregation in Linao. The preaching work got its start there in 1968, and the first Witness of Jehovah in Linao was baptized in 1970. For four years this brother was alone in the preaching work and had to endure ridicule from family members and acquaintances. Finally, in 1974, his wife responded favorably to Bible truth and was baptized. This was followed by the baptisms of four fleshly brothers, four sisters, four uncles, six nephews, and a brother-in-law and his wife. The congregation formed there was one big family. In time, three of the five brothers began serving as elders and one as a ministerial servant.

Luis and Juan are full-time preachers who concentrate on sowing Kingdom seed in Quemchi, a small town 20 miles from Linao. Daily, they climb fences, cross fields thick with vegetation, and walk up and down hills, with wind and rain as constant companions. To reach nearby islands, they use small boats that travel to the island of Chiloé two or three times a week. They remain on an island for a couple of days. A trip between islands can make a landlubber feel a bit queasy, but the islanders' hospitality and kindness more than make up for this. Luis and Juan were joined by another Kingdom publisher, and together they try to reach the 11,500 inhabitants in their territory. Though the increase was slow, Luis and Juan were overjoyed to have 36 present at the 1989 Memorial celebration.

Back to the Mainland

Continuing north, we cross the Chacao channel and reach the mainland. In this area, pioneers Ramón and Irene work a vast territory that includes isolated groups in Maullín, Carelmapu, and Pargua. Witnesses on the island of Chiloé walk for an hour and then take a *transbordador* (ferry boat) to cross the strait and attend Christian meetings in Pargua. Ramón travels an hour and 20 minutes by bus from Maullín to conduct meetings that are generally attended by twice as many people as there are publishers. Why does it take so long to go a distance of only 24 miles? Because the bus stops all along the road to pick up passengers burdened with bags of fruits and vegetables, sacks of potatoes and onions, and sometimes even with live pigs and chickens. Anything that cannot be placed on top of the bus goes inside. The net result is a long trip with many smells, sights, and sounds.

Since very few of these pioneers have cars, missing a bus running between

towns results in a long walk, unless someone offers a ride. As Ramón and a Bible student rode with one driver, he asked: "How are the people responding to your work?" Noting their inquisitive glances, he said: "I'm the priest in this pueblo, and you are Jehovah's Witnesses. I know your work well and like your magazines." There was quite a question-and-answer session before he dropped them off in Pargua in time for a meeting. The priest surely had other questions answered as he continued to read our journals.

It is not always easy for Ramón and Irene to reach the 20 homes where they conduct Bible studies. Some are located across the Maullín River or in isolated fishing villages and have to be reached by small boat. Though the heavy rains can be discouraging, it was clear that the endurance displayed by them and the 18 other Kingdom publishers scattered throughout this rural territory was producing fruitage when 77 gathered together for the Memorial.

In Los Muermos, full-time Kingdom proclaimers Juan and Gladys have conducted 23 Bible studies. Long walks over muddy roads are rewarded when Kingdom seed takes root in the hearts of teachable individuals. In one isolated region in the coastal mountain range near Estaquilla, Juan and Gladys worked an area that had not previously been visited. They asked a Bible student if he would lend them his horse for the day. "Of course," he replied. "May I go with you?" Juan soon realized that this must have been by Jehovah's direction. It would have been easy to get lost in the dense forest, but the interested person knew the area well and led them to homes not visible from the mountain paths. Quite sore after nine hours of walking and horseback riding, one of the special pioneers asked the Bible student how

he felt. The man responded: "The only thing I ask is that you take me along the next time." This appreciative person continued to make spiritual progress and was baptized in January 1988. His wife was soon baptized at a circuit assembly.

During a visit by the circuit overseer, the 11 publishers in Estaquilla were delighted to have 110 attend the public talk. In a small town of 1,000 closer to Los Muermos, 66 met for the Memorial. So there is much to do in this large field. —Matthew 9:37, 38.

Farther north, we find pioneers Alan and Fernando. As they walked along a dusty road one day, a driver offered them a ride on the back of his truck. After getting off, they had to laugh because a thick layer of dust covered them from head to toe. A sense of humor and the joy of conducting 20 home Bible studies helps to overcome such inconveniences. And imagine their joy when 65 attended the Memorial and the first two local people joined them in the preaching work the next month!

Crossing the Bío-Bío

To reach sheeplike ones closer to the Andes Mountains, it is necessary to cross a gorge with the roaring waters of the Bío-Bío River 150 feet below. This is done on a fragile wood structure suspended from a cable that stretches across the gorge. With some misgivings, you climb on and move a lever that frees the platform to roll down the cable. You hang on to the railing of the platform as you move swiftly out over the middle of the gorge, where you swing to a stop. After catching your breath, you move another lever back and forth, slowly inching your way across the other half. Definitely not for the faint-hearted! Yet, one sister does this every week to reach a sheeplike person in a distant mountain village!

The fine example set by pioneers and other Kingdom publishers encourages interested ones who have appreciative hearts to make a corresponding effort to attend Christian meetings. (Hebrews 10: 24, 25) One family travels 25 miles on horseback to the Bío-Bío River and then walks another 7 miles to the Kingdom Hall.

CAN YOU BE HAPPY WITH MUCH TO DO?

MOST of us lead very busy, often hectic, lives. Relentless pressures of modern-day living require that we put forth constant effort just to keep pace. Husbands and fathers must meet pressing obligations to their families, employers, and others. Wives and mothers must look after the household needs of their families and often have to work secularly. Young people also are under pressure to keep up with certain family obligations while acquiring an education that will prepare them for a productive role in society.

But what about those of us who have dedicated our lives to Jehovah God and are his baptized Witnesses? In addition to all the other demands made on us, we have this admonition of the apostle Paul: "My beloved brothers, become steadfast, unmovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) Yes, many added responsibilities are part of the requirements for true worship. How can we

What do the pioneers recall when they look back over the years? Snowcapped volcanoes, graceful fields, and rushing rivers? The dust, rain, mud, and long walks? Yes, but they especially remember the friendly people who responded favorably to the good news. These sheeplike ones surely make all the effort worth while. What a joy it is to sow Kingdom seed in southern Chile!

fulfill all these obligations and have peace of mind and a happy outlook?

Accomplishment Brings Happiness

Happiness—a feeling of well-being or contentment—is closely related to success in handling life's responsibilities. If we are able to meet our daily obligations in a reasonably efficient manner, getting things done on time and in an orderly way, we have a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. That is the way it should be, and the result contributes to our happiness.

Jehovah God never intended that our handling responsibilities should be an oppressive burden. Rather, it has always been his desire that we 'rejoice and see good for all our hard work.' (Ecclesiastes 3:12, 13) When we are happy in our work, we are usually productive. We readily take instruction and get along peaceably with others. On the other hand, if we are unhappy, our work tends to become drudgery—something monotonous, boring, even emotionally taxing. This leads to unpro-

ductive work habits and a negative frame of mind. Life becomes a daily struggle as we try to meet all the demands made on us. However, if we can find a way to remain happy in what we are doing, we are more likely to experience a rewarding and fulfilling way of life.

Be Balanced

If we are to be happy even though we have much to do, we need to be balanced. And what is balance? It is "mental and emotional steadiness." A balanced person strives to be orderly in his activities. He plans ahead, avoids procrastination, and is moderate in

habits. He displays self-control in food, drink, recreation, hobbies, and entertainment. Actually, he demonstrates "self-control in all things"—1 Corinthians 9:24-27; compare Titus 2:2.

Prayer plays a vital role in maintaining Christian balance. A servant of Jehovah can pray for God's holy spirit and for his heavenly Father's help in cultivating its fruitage, including self-control. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22, 23) Especially should a Christian look to God in prayer when beset by trials that threaten to disturb his balance. "Roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him, and he himself will act," said the psalmist David. (Psalm 37:5) We may sometimes need to pray as David did when he pleaded: "O God, do act quickly for me. You are my help and the Provider of escape for me. O Jehovah, do not be too late." (Psalm 70:5) Never forget that by prayer it is possible to maintain balance and to enjoy

'the peace of God that excels all thought and guards our hearts and mental powers.' —Philippians 4:6, 7.

Because he depends on Jehovah and enjoys the peace of God, a balanced Christian is sound in mind. (Titus 2:11, 12) This comes from having a good comprehension of Bible principles and by applying them in his life. Such a person is not hypocritical, nor is he hasty in judgment.

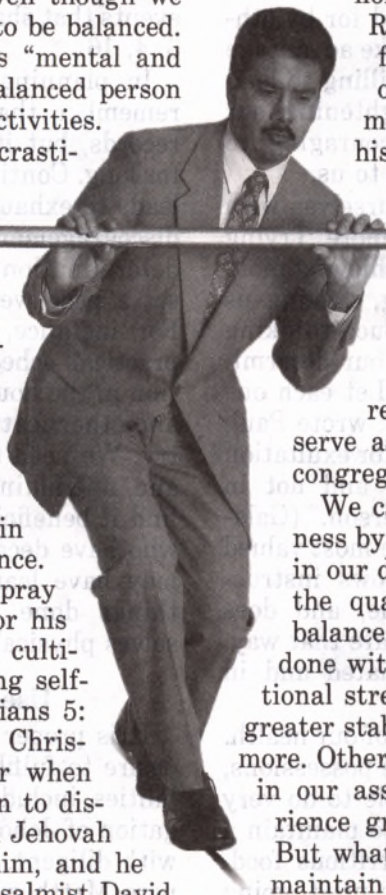
Reasonableness keeps him from being opinionated or obstinate. He maintains a modest view of himself and his capabilities, and this enables him to cooperate with

others. (Micah 6:8) Interestingly, the traits that help a person to be balanced are also among the qualities required of those appointed to serve as overseers in the Christian congregation.—1 Timothy 3:2, 3.

We can add greatly to our happiness by striving to be more balanced in our daily activities. By displaying the qualities associated with good balance, we can get necessary things done without severe physical or emotional stress. Our life-style will reflect greater stability, and we will accomplish more. Others will find increased pleasure in our association, and we will experience greater contentment and joy. But what are some practical ways to maintain balance?

Practical Ways to Maintain Balance

In order to maintain balance, we should try to be prompt and organized in handling our personal affairs. We need to plan ahead, caring for matters in an orderly, systematic manner. Those lacking good



organization and tending to procrastinate complicate their lives with increased levels of tension and anxiety. Success in this area of life will help us to feel that we are in control instead of feeling that we are helpless victims of circumstances.

We should not try to do everything ourselves. Those unwilling to accept help from others often pay a heavy price in exhaustion and frustration. There are various tasks that could be cared for by others. Therefore, it is wise to take advantage of the capabilities of those willing to lend a helping hand. Besides lightening our own load, this may be encouraging to those wishing to draw closer to us.

It is unwise to compare ourselves with those who may be able to do more. Trying to be like those apparently achieving more than we can is discouraging, making us feel inferior and unworthy. Such thinking is destructive, undermining our determination and self-confidence. "Let each one prove what his own work is," wrote Paul, "and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person." (Galatians 6:4) Remember that the most valued worker is the one who follows instructions, is steady and reliable, and does work of sound quality. If we are that way, our services will be appreciated and in demand.—Proverbs 22:29.

We need to take good care of our health. It is one of our most valuable possessions, for without it we may be able to do very little. Hence, we should try to maintain a healthful diet by eating nutritious food. We ought to get the rest we need, going to bed at a reasonable hour at night. When we are severely fatigued or feel illness coming on, we should not keep on pushing ourselves; we may pay a heavy price.

It is important to guard against developing a complaining spirit. If we give free rein to negative thinking, we can find

something wrong with almost anything or anyone. This is a sure way to rob ourselves and others of joy. Rather than gossip or complain about what we feel is not right, we should inform those responsible for handling the matter and leave it up to them to correct things. (Compare 1 Corinthians 1:10-12.) We are wise to maintain a positive outlook, always seeking and expecting to find good in others and in the events that shape our life.—Compare Jude 3, 4, 16.

In planning our activities, we should remember that a frantic pace may set records, but it can rarely be maintained for long. Continuous overexertion not only leads to exhaustion but can also bring on discouragement that can undermine our determination to carry on. Hence, let us set a pace we can maintain indefinitely. For instance, it is good to establish a practical schedule for regular participation in the house-to-house preaching work and other features of the Christian ministry. We need to allow time for relaxation and upbuilding recreation. And we will find it beneficial to talk with older people who have decades of experience, for they may have learned how to get necessary things done without exhausting themselves physically or emotionally.

Use Good Judgment

It is proper to feel an obligation and a desire to fulfill all our assigned responsibilities, including those within the congregation of Jehovah's people. God is pleased with diligent, dependable workers. (Compare Matthew 25:21; Titus 2:11-14.) But the Scriptures urge: "Safeguard practical wisdom and thinking ability." (Proverbs 3:21) The application of Biblical wisdom will benefit us, and we need to use common sense and good judgment, making careful plans and always keeping within the limits of our strength.

The admonition to have plenty to do in the Lord's work must be balanced with the caution recommended at Ecclesiastes 9:4. There we read: "A live dog is better off than a dead lion." Yes, a living dog, though despised by some, is better off than a dead lion, an animal many consider regal. If we exercise balance and take proper care of our health, we will live and can continue to do things. The dead have no further share in any activity. Good judgment can help us to find a reasonable balance that permits us to

get necessary things accomplished without losing our joy.

So, then, having much to do does not mean that we cannot be happy. The busiest people can be among the happiest if they are reasonable, maintain a fine outlook, and use good judgment so as to keep well-balanced. We can experience the greatest happiness possible if we display wisdom, perform good works, and rest our hope on Jehovah God.—1 Timothy 6:17-19.

Questions From Readers

■ At Matthew 10:21, was Jesus warning us that many brothers in the congregation will turn against their spiritual brothers?

No, that is not the point of Jesus' warning, which reads: "Further, brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and will have them put to death."—Matthew 10:21.

The context shows that Jesus said this to the 12 apostles as he sent them on a preaching tour in Israel. Much of what he said had primary meaning for the apostles. For example, he said that they were empowered to perform miraculous cures, exorcisms, and even resurrections. (Matthew 10:1, 8; 11:1) History proves that not all Christians received such miraculous powers, confirming that Jesus was here addressing one definite audience—his apostles.

Yet, some of what Jesus said did extend beyond the apostles' preaching tour. He told them: "Be on your guard against men; . . . you will be haled before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them and the nations." (Matthew 10:17, 18) On that tour, the 12 likely faced opposition, but

there is no evidence that they were taken "before governors and kings" to give a witness to "the nations."* In later years, the apostles appeared before rulers, such as Kings Herod Agrippa I and II, Sergius Paulus, Gallio, and even Emperor Nero. (Acts 12:1, 2; 13:6, 7; 18:12; 25:8-12, 21; 26:1-3) So Jesus' words had some application later.

Jesus' advice continued with the warning: "Brother will deliver up brother to death." He was not referring to spiritual brothers any more than he was to spiritual fathers or children with his next words in verse 21: "A father [will deliver up] his child, and children will rise up against parents and will have them put to death." Jesus meant that the apostles could expect hostility or opposition even from relatives.—Matthew 10:35, 36.

* Other translations render this "the pagans" (*The Jerusalem Bible*), "the Gentiles" (*New International Version* and versions by Moffatt and Lamsa), and "the heathen" (*The New English Bible*).

The apostles would need endurance on that preaching tour. Jesus continued: "You will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name; but he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved."—Matthew 10:22.

Some of what Jesus said on that occasion has import for us as Jehovah's Witnesses today. The emphasis of our preaching is on the Kingdom. We perform our ministry free of charge and look for people who are interested in the message or who are worthy of it. Caution is appropriate. Opposers abound. Sometimes relatives, neighbors, or workmates cause severe problems, especially for sincere ones who are beginning to pursue the course of true Christianity. Jesus repeated a warning about such opposition when describing "the sign" of his presence. (Matthew 24:3, 9, 10; Luke 21:16, 17) He also restated our need to 'endure to the end in order to be saved.' Yes, we need to endure until the end of our present life or until this system of things ends and we can enter the new world.—Matthew 24:13.

