

The **Watchtower**
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

August 15, 1991

**HEALTH and HAPPINESS
CAN BE YOURS**

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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.

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HEALTH AND HAPPINESS *Can They Be Yours?*

AS LONG AS there have been imperfect men and women, they have longed for health and happiness. Though these are surely two of the most important human desires, they have proved elusive.

Men have given much thought to, and offered much counsel on, this search. Observed Dr. Dennis Jaffe: "Today, the key to enduring health and healing often lies in your own behavior." Abraham Lincoln once commented: "People are about as happy as they make up their mind to be." Do you agree? How keenly do you desire happiness? How much does achieving it depend on having good health?

People have looked everywhere for happiness, following seemingly endless leads. They have investigated philosophy, psychology, and metaphysics. In their search for happiness, some have explored science, the

arts, and music. Yet there is little doubt that a major part of true happiness is related to having good health. "If you've got your health, you've got just about everything," said a popular television commercial.

Pursuing this avenue, many people have explored a variety of health theories, both orthodox and unorthodox. Nearly every public library shows the endless possibilities of diet regimens and forms of treatment. "Many books have been written on health, starting in antiquity," commented the noted heart specialist Dr. Paul Dudley White. "One of the best was *Regiment of Helthe* written about a thousand years ago."

Despite all of this, the search for health and happiness has been a disappointing one for the majority of humans. Does this surprise you, considering how advanced our civilization has supposedly become? Clearly,

science has not done away with sickness, aging, and death.

But would it further surprise you to know that we still have no way to measure happiness and no good definition of what it is? In a lecture considering "Reflections on Happiness," Pierre Teilhard de Chardin concluded: "For centuries this has been the subject of endless books, investigations, individual and collective experiments, one after another; and, sad to relate, there has been complete

failure to reach unanimity. For many of us, in the end, the only practical conclusion to be drawn from the whole discussion is that it is useless to continue the search."

Is that how you feel about happiness? Ask yourself some personal but honest questions. Are you truly happy now? Or is real happiness to be found only in heaven? Is there any sure prospect that we can have health and happiness, and even have these right here on earth?

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

How Can You Find Them?

MAN has long recognized a close link between health and happiness. Hippocrates, thought of as "the father of medicine," stated: "A wise man should consider that health is the greatest of human blessings." German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer noted: "The two foes of human happiness are pain and boredom."

In the book *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient*, Norman Cousins related his experience in using laughter to combat his potentially life-threatening illness. He attributed his recovery at least partially to the belly laughs he enjoyed while watching comedy films. Reputable doctors have begun to

investigate a possible benefit of certain chemicals, called endorphins, that are released in the body when we laugh. We can thus see the wisdom of the inspired proverb: "A heart that is joyful does good as a curer." —Proverbs 17:22.

Yet, paradoxically, researchers have found that good health does not necessarily guarantee happiness, for many healthy people are unhappy. Research based on questionnaire and interview responses of well over 100,000 people led Jonathan Freedman to the unexpected conclusion that over 50 percent of the people who were unhappy with their lives were basically healthy.



Health and Happiness—In a Word

Where, then, are we to look for the elusive combination of health and happiness? An interesting insight was given centuries ago by Confucius: "Good government obtains when those who are near are made happy, and those who are far off are attracted." Closer to our time, statesman Thomas Jefferson proclaimed that the only aim of government is "to secure the greatest degree of happiness possible to the general mass of those associated under it."

In fact, close inspection reveals that the ultimate answer to mankind's quest for health and happiness does indeed focus on one thing—government.

Through the ages, humans have looked there—to government—for their happiness. For example, the United States Declaration of Independence contains these famous words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Note that the government there envisioned promised its subjects only the right to *pursue* happiness. As far as health is concerned, many governments commendably have promoted programs to improve the health of their citizens. Still, general good health for the majority has proved elusive.

Yet what of a government that promises to provide even more? What if it promises not only the pursuit of happiness but happiness itself? And what if it promises, not health insurance, but good health itself? Would you not rejoice that here lies the ultimate key to mankind's quest for health and happiness?

Many today might think this is an unrealistic dream, yet such a government is actually foretold and described in some detail. We can find the reliable information in

the Holy Bible, and the government is God's Messianic Kingdom.

The Kingdom, or Government, of God

The Bible speaks often of "the kingdom of God." Just what is it? *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* defines "kingdom" as "a government or country headed by a king or queen." Put simply, God's Kingdom is a government, a royal government headed by God's anointed Son and King, Jesus Christ. Just how important is this government in God's purpose? Let Jesus' words answer: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom . . . This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth . . . I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth. . . . The kingdom of God is being declared as good news, and every sort of person is pressing forward toward it." —Matthew 6:33; 24:14; Luke 4:43; 16:16.

The word "kingdom" is used over a hundred times in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life, sometimes very specifically in connection with health and happiness. Note Matthew 9:35: "Jesus set out on a tour of all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom and curing every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity." Although Jesus linked the bringing of good health with his teaching about the Kingdom, we should note that his curing of illnesses was incidental to his preaching and teaching. He was known as "The Teacher," not "The Healer." (Matthew 26:18; Mark 14:14; John 1:38) He did not concentrate principally on healing people or providing care for the sick. His primary concern was always the Kingdom. By caring for people's ills, he showed his great compassion and manifested that he did have divine backing.

The healings by Jesus also served as a preview of the restoration of human health

that he will accomplish when God's Kingdom exercises full control of the earth. This is reinforced by the vision that is described at Revelation 22:1, 2: "He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of its broad way. And on this side of the river and on that side there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations."

But where will it be possible for us to enjoy this? It might seem too good to expect such a marvelous healing to occur on earth. Recall, however, Jesus' words that you yourself may have spoken in prayer: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth."—Matthew 6:10.

In God's Messianic Kingdom, then, lies our real, our reliable, hope for health and happiness in the future. A question remains, though.

Can We Enjoy Health and Happiness Now?

Even now, our following Bible principles may enable us to enjoy a greater measure of health, along with increased happiness. As has frequently been pointed out in the pages of this journal, those who apply the Bible in their daily lives usually are protected from the health problems resulting from sexual immorality, smoking, overdrinking, and drug abuse. They also experience the benefits of a calmer life and better relations with relatives and others.

We have already seen, though, that having good health does not necessarily result in lasting happiness. What would it take for you to enjoy a larger measure of happiness?

In the research mentioned earlier, Jonathan Freedman considered that question in depth. He looked at such factors as "Love

and Sex," "Youth and Age," "Income and Education," even "Town and Country." It may interest you to know that he found that these factors had little effect on one's basic happiness. For example, citing instances of people who had a lot of material things but were still unhappy, he concluded: "We have seen that, somewhat surprisingly, neither income nor education seems to play a major role in happiness."

His conclusions echoed a wise writer of the Bible, the apostle Paul, who said: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Philippians 4:11, *King James Version*) Recall, too, Jesus' words: "Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of covetousness, because even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses."—Luke 12:15.

Indeed, Professor Freedman found this: "Time after time, as we look at the statements by unhappy people who appear to have everything, we find them commenting that their lives lack meaning and direction." He added: "I hesitate to make too much of this, but it does appear that spiritual values color one's feelings about reality, while a lack of them to some extent poisons or detracts from everything else."

In our day we see evidence of the truth of these observations. Look around you. Do you not see almost all people—some with little, some with much—chasing happiness but not enjoying much of it? True, some have given up and live in quiet desperation, yet many live their lives as if on a treadmill, chasing, but never quite catching, what they pursue. Some marry to acquire happiness, even while their neighbor is divorcing for the same reason. Others burn themselves out with work, while still others drop out for long and perhaps expensive vacations. All seek the same elusive end, to be healthy and happy. Do they find it? Have you found it?

***Happy people are glad
to share with others their
hope for perfect health***

Your Health, Your Happiness

The fact is, you can have a large measure of health and happiness now. How so?

Certainly it is wise to try to take care of your health in a balanced way, such as by applying the Bible's practical counsel. It will also help to be realistic. That involves recognizing that sickness may come to our imperfect bodies, yet we will not be crushed when that occurs. This may require further effort to maintain an optimistic outlook as we focus on the promise of perfect health in the new world to come.

To see if you have a reasonable degree of happiness now, ask yourself these questions: 1. Am I essentially in control of my own life? 2. Am I basically at peace with myself and those around me? 3. Am I generally pleased with my life's accomplishments as weighed in the light of the Bible? 4. Are my family and I enjoying being able to serve God?

To a large extent, the choice is ours. Many of us may basically be healthy, and we have



the option to be happy too. But we must have spiritual goals and then work to achieve them. Remember Jesus' words: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21) And we have a Bible-based reason to look forward to even greater health and happiness under the perfect rule of the Messianic Kingdom. Then complete health and happiness can be ours.

The Pursuit of Liberty in

S · E · N · E · G · A · L

JUST offshore from Dakar, the modern capital of Senegal, lies small Gorée Island. On it stands a stark reminder of a dark part of history—a slave house built in 1776.

It is one of many such houses in which from 150 to 200 slaves were confined in squalid conditions for up to three months before being shipped to far-away places. Families were split up, the members never to see one another again; the father might be sent to Louisiana in North America, the mother to Brazil or Cuba, and the children to Haiti, Guyana, or Martinique. What disregard for human liberty! This is also a powerful reminder that freedom is a precious privilege that has not always been the lot of all people.

I learned of this from the tourist brochure that I was reading aboard a plane heading for Senegal, the most westerly country on the big bulge of West Africa. Senegal's savanna country lies between deserts to the north and east and dense jungles to the south. Here you can find the majestic, long-lived baobab tree, with its curious fruit called monkey bread, from which cream of tartar is made. This is also the land of monkeys and colorful birds and of quaint villages nestled in mango groves.



I sat back and thought about my long-awaited visit to this gateway to West Africa. Today, Senegal, with its seven million inhabitants from many different ethnic backgrounds, enjoys full liberty. But could it be that a person might be free physically, yet be enslaved to practices and superstitions that rob him of true liberty? I looked forward anxiously to meeting my spiritual brothers and learning firsthand of the progress, in that part of the world, of the truth that sets men free.—John 8:32.

'Jehovah Wants You to Have This Building'

First on my agenda was a visit to the Watch Tower branch office and missionary home in Dakar. As we arrived at a modern-looking building in a quiet suburb, I noticed a large *J* on the front. My first question on the tour of the branch office was what the letter *J* stood for.

"It's very interesting," explained my guide. "When we were looking for larger branch facilities in 1985, we visited this building, which was under construction. But we felt it was too large for our needs.



▲ *The liberating waters of truth are shared freely in the villages*

▲ *Missionary home and branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Dakar, Senegal*

When the owner heard that we were Jehovah's Witnesses, he wanted very much to rent the building to us, as he knew of our honesty. 'I'm sure your God, Jehovah, wants you to have this building,' he said. 'Why, look! There is even a big *J* on the front! When I had it put there, I thought it was to stand for my name John, but now I'm sure it's for the name of God, Jehovah!' We have been happy to be in this fine building for the past five years."

Next I wanted to know how the preaching work got started in Senegal.

"The liberating waters of truth were introduced into Senegal in the early 1950's by one of Jehovah's Witnesses who came from France on a work contract. In 1965 a branch office was opened in Dakar to look

after the work in the French-speaking countries of Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania, as well as in the English-speaking country of Gambia. Since 1986 we have been caring for the work also in Guinea-Bissau, where Portuguese is spoken."

Aware that more than 90 percent of the population here are non-Christians, I asked what progress has been made. "It's true that many people in these lands are not familiar with the Bible," my guide said, "but the work is moving along steadily. In January 1991 we were pleased to see 596 Kingdom publishers. That shows that the local brothers and the missionaries have been working very hard."

"I understand there are many missionaries serving here," I observed.

"Yes, we have about 60 assigned to the various territories we care for, and they came from 13 countries. They work hard and have contributed greatly to getting the work on a good footing. This spirit is reflected by the local brothers in their love and zeal for the truth. Despite facing problems such as unemployment and very limited material means, many brothers spend 15 hours and more in the field ministry every month. We hope you will meet some of these zealous workers on your visit."

I looked forward to doing so.

In the Field With Missionaries

Margaret (who had been in missionary service for more than 20 years before her recent death) volunteered to take me along with her to her territory in the center of the city. We took a *car rapide* (rapid car) to get a taste of local life. It was, in fact, a small bus that made frequent stops. It carried 25 passengers, and if all of them were slim, I could see how the trip could almost be comfortable. The two ladies sharing my bench were definitely not slim, but I accepted the situation with a smile.

"In my downtown territory, you can see many interesting things," explained Margaret when we got to our destination. "See those colorful sandals?" she asked, pointing to some stalls along the sidewalk. "They are made with dyed skins of sheep and goats." We approached the sandal makers, and Margaret started her presentation to them in their language, Wolof. They listened intently and were fascinated by the illustrations of Adam and Eve in the colorful brochure.

In no time we were approached by hawkers, known here as *bana-bana* men, offering an endless variety of items. Some had brooms; others presented clothes, locks, medicine, purses, oranges, and even live birds. One wanted to sell me a *kora*, a



Along the coast, too, people of Senegal hear the Christian message

stringed instrument made from half a calabash, or gourd, with a stick for a neck; it is played with both hands. I noticed that on its back was a small image of a mask fashioned from leather, goat horn, and small "good luck" shells. We explained that we would not buy anything adorned with signs that might have to do with sorcery or unchristian rites. To our surprise, the *bana-bana* man agreed, indicating that he was a Muslim himself. He hid the *kora* behind his long flowing garb, or boubou, and listened carefully as Margaret presented the brochure, which was in Arabic. He was so enthused that he took the brochure and began reading it right there. After thanking us profusely, he left with the brochure and the unsold *kora*. We felt sure he would study the brochure at home.

Later, I talked to John, who had also been a missionary for over 20 years.

"People here are very friendly, and you can talk to almost everyone you meet," John told me. "The popular greeting '*assalam alaikum*' means 'peace be with you,' and most people are peaceable. This is the land of *teranga*, or hospitality, and it is expressed by kindness, human warmth, and gaiety." It was becoming easier for me to see why so many young foreign Witnesses could leave their families and friends to serve in this missionary field.

Freed to Pursue Full-Time Ministry

The missionary spirit has a profound influence on the local Witnesses. This is especially evident because widespread unemployment makes taking up the full-time pioneer service a real challenge. Marcel and Lucien, who were freed from many harmful habits by learning Bible truth, explained:

"We wanted to show our appreciation by taking up the pioneer service. But part-time work was hard to find. We tried gardening, but it didn't work out. Laundering clothes took up too much of our time. Now we are in the baking business, with certain stores as our regular customers, and this is working out well." Clearly it took a great deal of faith and ingenuity, along with sincere effort, but this proves it is possible to enter the full-time service even when economic conditions are difficult.

When Jehovah's Witnesses started to study the Bible with Michel, he was attending a university in Dakar. "I was depressed by the immoral spirit of so many of the students, and perplexing questions haunted me," he related. "Why was man enslaved to such harmful practices and conditions? The Bible gave me the answers. It was as if a heavy weight were lifted off my shoulders.

Although my parents insisted that I continue my studies, I engaged in the auxiliary pioneer service and then served as a regular pioneer for the remainder of the time I had to be in the university. I find sharing the good news with others as a pioneer, not the seeking of a career in a system that will soon go out of business, brings me the greatest joy." Michel is now serving as a special pioneer in Mbour.

Polygamy Versus Christian Monogamy

Local customs are not always in agreement with Christian principles, and this can present unique challenges. Alioune, the presiding overseer in one of the six congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in greater Dakar, related: "When I first heard the liberating truth, I had two wives. As a practicing Muslim, I was permitted by my religion to have even more. My father had four, and most of my friends had several. It is the accepted way here in Africa." But what was the effect of this way of life?

"Having more than one wife can cause many problems," Alioune explained, "especially as far as the children are concerned. I have ten children by my first wife and two by my second. In such families, the father is often a stranger to his children, so they do not benefit from his help and discipline. Incidentally, polygamy did not protect me from adultery either. Rather, it is self-control, a fruit of God's spirit, that has done that." So, what did Alioune do?

"I had my second wife return to her parents' home," he continued, "and tactfully explained that it was not that I had found anything displeasing with her, but it was to conform to God's requirements. I made special arrangements to care for all my children materially and spiritually, and I am thankful that today they too are serving

Jehovah. Of the nine that are publishers, five are baptized, two of whom serve as special pioneers, and the other three as regular and auxiliary pioneers. The truth has really set me free from many of the problems associated with raising children."

Fetish Worship Versus True Worship

Next on my itinerary was a visit to the Casamance region in the south. I was impressed by how fresh and green everything appeared. Well watered by the mighty Casamance River for some 180 miles, the area produces abundant rice, maize, and peanuts. Scattered through the countryside are circular, two-story huts, with thatched roofs in the form of a funnel to collect rainwater for the dry season. The capital, Ziguinchor, is built in the shelter of a vast palm grove. I was happy to meet a zealous congregation of Jehovah's people here.

Dominic, a missionary working in and around Ziguinchor, told me that the preaching work in this area is moving along very nicely. "Just ten years ago," he said, "there were 18 publishers in the Ziguinchor Congregation. Now there are 80. To care for this great increase, we have built a beautiful new Kingdom Hall, using red clay found right at the hall site. The project proved to be a great witness to the community. Favorable remarks were made by those who saw people from so many different tribes working together peacefully. At a recent circuit assembly, the peak attendance was 206, with 4 persons being baptized."

Many people in this part of Senegal still follow the animistic beliefs of their ancestors, worshiping fetishes even though professing to be Christians or Muslims. I listened intently to the story related by Victor, an elder in the Ziguinchor Congregation.

"I was born into a large fetish-worshipping family in Guinea. At my birth, my father

dedicated me to a certain spirit, or demon. To win its favor, I would regularly take a black suitcase from under the bed, set up a small altar, and offer blood sacrifices to the horn that represented my demon protector. Even after I became a Catholic, I still felt enslaved. After I moved to Senegal, Jehovah's Witnesses began studying the Bible with me. My wife and I learned that we could not continue 'eating at the table of Jehovah and the table of demons.' (1 Corinthians 10:21) But when I stopped offering sacrifices, the demons began to attack us. I was afraid to throw out the black suitcase with all its demonic objects because I knew of a man who had completely lost his mind when he did that." What a desperate situation Victor was in!

"Finally the words of Romans 8:31, 38, 39 gave us the needed strength to get rid of everything related to fetish worship. Now that we have placed our confidence in Jehovah, we have truly been liberated. My entire household has the wonderful hope of everlasting life in an earthly paradise, where all mankind will be free of the influence of wicked demons."

At last, it was time for me to leave. As I packed my bags, I reflected on my unforgettable visit to Senegal. How faith-strengthening it had been for me to meet and talk to so many people who have been freed from bondage to drug abuse, immorality, and superstition and who now enjoy true liberty. In spite of difficult economic conditions, they are finding joy and contentment in serving Jehovah, who brought them the sure hope of everlasting life in a paradise earth. How thankful we are to him who has made it possible to have such good news proclaimed not only in Senegal but also worldwide during "the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah"! (Isaiah 61:1, 2) —Contributed.

THE ABUNDANT GOODNESS OF JEHOVAH

"How abundant your goodness is, which you have treasured up for those fearing you!"—PSALM 31:19.

THERE was a time when God began to create 'the heavens as his throne and the earth as his footstool.' (Isaiah 66:1) The divine record does not reveal when this took place. It simply states: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) During the period of creation, untold millions of galaxies were formed, many containing thousands of millions of stars. Toward the outer edge of one such galaxy was a bright star orbited by a number of relatively small, dark spheres. One of them came to be called the earth. Compared to the great, shining stars, the earth was insignificant. Yet, this was what Jehovah purposed to be his footstool.

² Jehovah thus turned his creative abilities toward the planet Earth. "The firstborn of all creation" was at his side as a Master Worker while this small, dark mass was changed during the course of six long creative "days." It became, figuratively, a suitable resting-place for God's feet. (Colossians 1:15; Exodus 20:11; Proverbs 8:30) Here was where God purposed to place a new form of intelligent life: mankind. The first human pair, created from elements found in the ground, were placed in lovely, paradisaic

surroundings. (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7, 8) So perfect, so beautiful, was the final result of this outstanding act of creation that the Bible reveals God's feelings on the morning—the final part—of the sixth creative day: "God saw everything he had made and, look! it was *very good*."—Genesis 1:31.

God's Goodness

³ Thousands of years later, a descendant of that first human pair looked back to the time of creation and wrote: "[God's] invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship." (Romans 1:20) Yes, the superb excellence of the earth and of the creatures on it was indeed a marvelous reflection of God's invisible qualities—not least of which is God's abundant goodness. How appropriate, then, that God pronounced that everything he had created was good!—Psalm 31:19.

⁴ Goodness is the sixth aspect of the fruitage of God's spirit described by the apostle Paul at Galatians 5:22. Previous studies in the *Watchtower* magazine have discussed the first five fruits of the spirit, showing the importance of these in the cultivation of a

- 1, 2. (a) What immense work did Jehovah undertake at some time in the distant past?
(b) How did Jehovah describe the result of his creative activities?

3. What outstanding quality of God is revealed in creation?
4, 5. What is goodness?

rounded-out Christian personality.* How vital, though, that we do not forget goodness! Fittingly, we now give our attention to this quality.

⁵ What is goodness? It is the quality or state of being good. It is moral excellence, virtue. Hence, it is a positive quality that expresses itself in the performance of good and beneficial acts toward others. How can we display this endearing quality? Basically, by imitating Jehovah. Hence, before discussing further how we as individual Christians can manifest goodness, let us examine the goodness that our loving God, Jehovah, has shown in his providing for, and dealing with, the human family.

Goodness Manifested in Creation

⁶ What prompted our heavenly Father in the first place to share his enjoyment of life with intelligent living creatures? The apostle John answers that question when he says: "God is love." (1 John 4:8) Yes, unselfish love moved the great Source of life to create other living forms, providing some with a heavenly home and others with an earthly home. Of course, we know little of what heaven or the heavenly creatures are like. They are spirits—invisible to human eyes—and their home is in the spirit realm. But look around you at the earthly home that Jehovah provided for his human children. And consider mankind itself. Then you will begin to see with your own eyes powerful evidence of God's goodness.

⁷ Jehovah gave our first parents life. More than that, he made it possible for life to be

* The individual fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control.

6. What prompted Jehovah to create other intelligent forms of life?

7-9. How is God's goodness seen in the way he created the earth and man upon it?

highly pleasant, enjoyable. To begin with, he created their home, the earth, with a rotation, a temperature range, and an atmosphere that were just right. He set in motion water, nitrogen, and oxygen cycles that worked perfectly for the benefit and comfort of humans. He carpeted earth's surface with thousands of types of vegetation, some for man's food and some that especially delight the eye. He filled the skies with birds that give much pleasure with their colors and their songs. He filled the seas with swarms of fish and the land with many kinds of animals, some wild and some that can be tamed. What prodigious generosity! And what evidence of God's goodness of heart! —Psalm 104:24.

⁸ Look, now, at the way God made man. His arms, legs, and hands are just what are needed to enable him to maintain his balance and move about with ease. Thus, from the materials found so abundantly on the earth around him, he can obtain food and other necessities for himself. Jehovah provided taste buds so that eating and drinking were not just mechanical acts performed to obtain energy—like connecting an appliance to an electrical outlet today. No, eating and drinking were designed to give enjoyment, as they not only fill the stomach but also excite the sense of taste. Jehovah gave man ears as well and surrounded him with a multitude of sounds to delight those ears. What a pleasure it is to listen to the soothing murmur of a running brook, the cooing of a turtledove, or the chuckling laugh of a baby! Yes, thanks to God's goodness, in spite of all the bad things that have happened since creation, it is still a joy to be alive.

⁹ Look, too, at our other senses. How many varying, delightful colors exist to please our eyes! And how satisfying it is to smell the delicate fragrance of a flower! No wonder the psalmist exclaimed to Jehovah:

**Creation gives evidence
of God's abundant goodness**

"I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful"!—Psalm 139:14.

**Mankind's Fall
and Rescue**

¹⁰ Sadly, in time our first parents displayed a lack of appreciation for all of God's goodness toward them. They showed this when they disobeyed Jehovah's commands and trespassed against the sole restriction he had imposed. As a result, they and their offspring came to know sorrow, suffering, and death. (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:16-19; Romans 5:12) Throughout the millenniums that have passed since that act of disobedience, most of mankind has shown indifference toward or lack of appreciation for God's goodness. In spite of this, though, thankless and unappreciative people still benefit from God's goodness. In what way? The apostle Paul explained to the inhabitants of Lystra in the Middle East: "[God] did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer."—Acts 14:17.

¹¹ But God's goodness has not been limited to continuing to provide the delightful, life-sustaining provisions with which the

10. How have most humans responded to God's goodness, yet how do they continue to benefit from it?

11. In what way does God's goodness go further than providing a delightful home for mankind?



earth abounds. No, he went further. Jehovah showed himself ready to forgive the sins of Adam's offspring and to continue to nurture relations with faithful ones among mankind. This aspect of God's goodness was brought to the attention of Moses when Jehovah promised to cause 'all his goodness to pass before [Moses'] face.' Moses then heard the declaration: "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 33:19; 34:6, 7.



Our being allowed to share in the preaching work is an outstanding proof of God's goodness

awareness of God's goodness in this regard: "The sins of my youth and my revolts O do not remember. According to your loving-kindness do you yourself remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Jehovah." —Psalm 25:7.

¹³ In time Jehovah's goodness moved him to provide a more effective and permanent way to forgive sins. This was by means of the sacrifice of Jesus, who was a descendant of King David. (Matthew 1:6-16; Luke 3:23-31) Jesus did not sin. Hence, when he died, his life given in sacrifice had great value, and God accepted it as a ransom that could cover all of Adam's sinful offspring. The apostle Paul wrote: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus. God set him forth as an offering for propitiation through faith in his blood." —Romans 3:23-26.

¹⁴ Faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice accomplishes much for Christians, much more than those animal sacrifices under the Law covenant did for the Israelites. It led to a limited number of Christians being declared righteous and adopted by God's spirit to become his sons. They thus became Jesus' brothers and gained the hope of being res-

¹² In Moses' day, Jehovah established a legal system for the new nation of Israel whereby unintentional sinners could obtain a provisional, or symbolic, forgiveness of sin. Through the Law covenant that Moses mediated, the Israelites became God's special nation and were taught to offer to Jehovah various animal sacrifices that would cover their sins and unclean acts. Thus, despite their imperfect natures, repentant Israelites could continue to approach Jehovah acceptably and know that their worship was pleasing to him. King David, a member of that nation under the Law, expressed his

12. What provisions of the Mosaic Law showed Jehovah's goodness?

13. How did Jehovah provide a more effective way than animal sacrifices for forgiveness of sins?

14. What wonderful hopes are made possible for humans through the ransom sacrifice?

urrected as spirit creatures to share with him in his heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 22: 29, 30; Romans 8:14-17) Imagine that God would open such heavenly prospects to creatures living on this small planet, the earth! A small group cherishing this hope still remains. But for millions of other Christians, exercise of faith in the ransom opens the way to enjoy what Adam and Eve lost—eternal life on a paradise, gardenlike earth. The Law covenant alone had been able to supply neither heavenly nor earthly future prospects for its adherents.

¹⁵ How appropriate that the message about the new arrangements that God set in motion through Jesus Christ is called “good news,” for it reflects God’s goodness. (2 Timothy 1:9, 10) In the Bible, the good news is sometimes called the “good news of the kingdom.” Today it centers on the truth that the Kingdom has been established under the rulership of the resurrected Jesus. (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 11:15; 14:6, 7) Nevertheless, the good news involves more. As indicated by Paul’s words to Timothy just quoted, it includes the knowledge that Jesus offered a ransom sacrifice in our behalf. Without that sacrifice, our relationship with God, our very salvation—not to mention the Kingdom of Jesus and 144,000 priests and kings taken from the earth—would not be possible. What a wonderful manifestation of God’s goodness the ransom is!

God’s Goodness Today

¹⁶ Looking forward to “the last days,” the apostle Paul warned: “Men will be . . . without love of goodness.” (2 Timothy 3:1-3) Even normal manifestations of goodness, such as generosity and neighborliness, would not be appreciated. How encouraging, then, is the heartwarming prophecy of Hosea 3:5: “The sons of Israel will come back

15. What is included in the good news?

16, 17. How was Hosea 3:5 fulfilled (a) in 537 B.C.E.? (b) in 1919 C.E.?

and certainly look for Jehovah their God, and for David their king; and they will certainly come quivering to Jehovah and to his goodness in the final part of the days.”

¹⁷ This prophecy was first fulfilled in 537 B.C.E. when the Jews returned to the Promised Land from exile in Babylon. In modern times, it began its fulfillment in the year 1919 when the remnant of spiritual Israel came out of Satan’s organization and started earnestly looking for Jehovah and his goodness. They found that “David their king” had been reigning in the person of Jesus Christ in heavenly power since 1914. Under his heavenly supervision, they enthusiastically took up the announcing of this good news to the nations. Thus they began to fulfill the commission recorded at Matthew 24:14: “This good news of the [established] kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.”

¹⁸ Today, the remnant of anointed ones have been joined by the “great crowd,” who similarly hail Jehovah’s goodness. (Revelation 7:9) Now, more than four million echo the voice of the angel seen by the apostle John in vision as they announce to all the

18. Who have joined the remnant of spiritual Israel in declaring the good news?

Can You Answer?

- ☐ In what way does creation reflect God’s goodness?
- ☐ What arrangements did Jehovah make to forgive the sins of repentant humans?
- ☐ In fulfillment of Hosea 3:5, when did the anointed remnant come to Jehovah and his goodness, and what did this lead to?
- ☐ What is one of the greatest evidences of God’s goodness today?

nations: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived, and so worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters."—Revelation 14:7.

¹⁹ One of the greatest evidences of God's goodness is that he allows us to be his coworkers in this climactic work. What a privilege to have entrusted to us "the glorious good news of the happy God"! (1 Timothy 1:11) By our preaching and teaching this to others, we are manifesting to a high degree that important fruit of God's spirit, goodness. Thus, we have the attitude of

19. Name one of the greatest evidences of God's goodness.

God's ancient servant David, who said: "With the mention of the abundance of your goodness they will bubble over, and because of your righteousness they will cry out joyfully."—Psalm 145:7.

²⁰ However, is sharing in the preaching of the good news the only way to manifest goodness in our lives? By no means! We are encouraged to become "imitators of God, as beloved children." (Ephesians 5:1) God's goodness is manifested in various ways. Hence, our goodness too should affect many aspects of our lives. Some of these will be considered in the following article.

20. What further information regarding goodness will be discussed in the next article?

PRODUCING "EVERY SORT OF GOODNESS"

"The fruitage of the light consists of every sort of goodness."—EPHESIANS 5:9.

AFTER the rebellion in Eden, some six thousand years ago, and again after the Flood of Noah's day, mankind divided into two groups, or organizations, one made up of those who strove to serve Jehovah, the other of those who followed Satan. Do these organizations still exist? Certainly they do! The prophet Isaiah mentioned these two groups and foretold their condition in our time: "Look! darkness itself will cover the earth, and thick gloom the national groups; but upon you Jehovah will shine forth, and upon you his own glory will be seen."—Isaiah 60:1, 2.

1, 2. What two groups have existed since ancient times, and how different are their situations today?

² Yes, the difference between these two organizations is as great as that between darkness and light. And just as a beam of light will attract a man lost in the darkness, so light from Jehovah shining in this dark world has attracted millions of righthearted ones to God's organization. As Isaiah went on to say: "Nations [other sheep] will certainly go to your light, and kings [anointed Kingdom heirs] to the brightness of your shining forth."—Isaiah 60:3.

³ How do Jehovah's people display the glory of Jehovah? For one thing, they preach the good news of God's established, heavenly

3. In what ways do Christians display the glory of Jehovah?

Kingdom. (Mark 13:10) But more than that, they imitate Jehovah, the prime example of goodness, and thus by their conduct attract meek ones to the light. (Ephesians 5:1) Paul said: "You were once darkness, but you are now light in connection with the Lord. Go on walking as children of light." He continued: "The fruitage of the light consists of every sort of goodness and righteousness and truth. Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord; and quit sharing with them in the unfruitful works that belong to the darkness." (Ephesians 5:8-11) What did Paul mean by "every sort of goodness"?

⁴ As our previous article showed, goodness is the quality or state of moral excellence, virtue. Jesus said that only Jehovah is good in the absolute sense. (Mark 10:18) Nevertheless, a Christian can imitate Jehovah by cultivating goodness as a fruit of the spirit. (Galatians 5:22) Commenting on *a-ga-thos*, the Greek word for "good," *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* says, "[It] describes that which, being good in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect." A Christian cultivating goodness will therefore both *be* good and *do* good. (Compare Deuteronomy 12:28.) He will also avoid things that are opposed to goodness, "the unfruitful works that belong to the darkness." The different ways that a Christian can manifest goodness in his conduct are the 'sorts of goodness' that Paul mentioned. What are some of these?

"Keep Doing Good"

⁵ Paul referred to one of these in his letter to the Romans. Speaking of subjection to "the superior authorities," he said: "Do you, then, want to have no fear of the authority?"

4. What is goodness, and how is it seen in a Christian?

5. What is one sort of goodness, and why should a Christian cultivate it?

Keep doing good, and you will have praise from it." The "good" he refers to is obedience to the laws and arrangements of secular authorities. Why should a Christian be subject to these? So as to avoid unnecessary conflict with the authorities, thus risking punishment and—more important—in order to preserve a clean conscience before God. (Romans 13:1-7) While preserving his primary obedience to Jehovah, a Christian 'honors the king,' not rebelling against authorities that Jehovah God allows to exist. (1 Peter 2:13-17) In this way, Christians are good neighbors, good citizens, and good examples.

Considerate of Others

⁶ Jehovah's goodness is displayed in his providing for all earth's inhabitants "rains from heaven and fruitful seasons." This results in a 'fullness of food and good cheer' and shows him to be a truly considerate God. (Acts 14:17) We can imitate him in this respect by showing consideration for others in small and large ways. For whom, specifically? Paul refers in particular to the elders, "those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you." He urges Christians to give these "more than extraordinary consideration in love because of their work." (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13) How can we do this? By cooperating fully with them—for example, by sharing in necessary work in the Kingdom Hall. While always feeling free to approach the elders for help when needed, we should not be unreasonably demanding. Rather, in whatever ways we can, we try to lighten the load of these hardworking shepherds, many of whom have family responsibilities in addition to their congregation duties.

6. (a) What is another aspect of goodness?
(b) Who are mentioned in the Bible as deserving of our consideration?

***Consideration for others
is an aspect of goodness***

⁷ The physically old also deserve our consideration. A specific commandment of the Mosaic Law was: "Before gray hair you should rise up, and you must show consideration for the person of an old man, and you must be in fear of your God. I am Jehovah." (Leviticus 19: 32) How can this consideration be shown? Younger ones may wish to volunteer to help them with shopping or with other chores. The elders can considerably check to see if any older ones need help to attend meetings. At assemblies, young, vigorous individuals will avoid jostling slower-moving older ones in an impatient attempt to pass, and they will be patient if an elderly one is a little slow getting seated or getting food.

⁸ The psalmist mentions another group needing consideration: "Happy is anyone acting with consideration toward the lowly one." (Psalm 41:1) It may be easy to be considerate of the prominent or the wealthy, but what of the lowly or the poor? The Bible writer James indicated that showing equal consideration to these is a test of our righteousness and Christian love. May we pass this test by being thoughtful toward all regardless of their circumstances.—Philippians 2:3, 4; James 2:2-4, 8, 9.

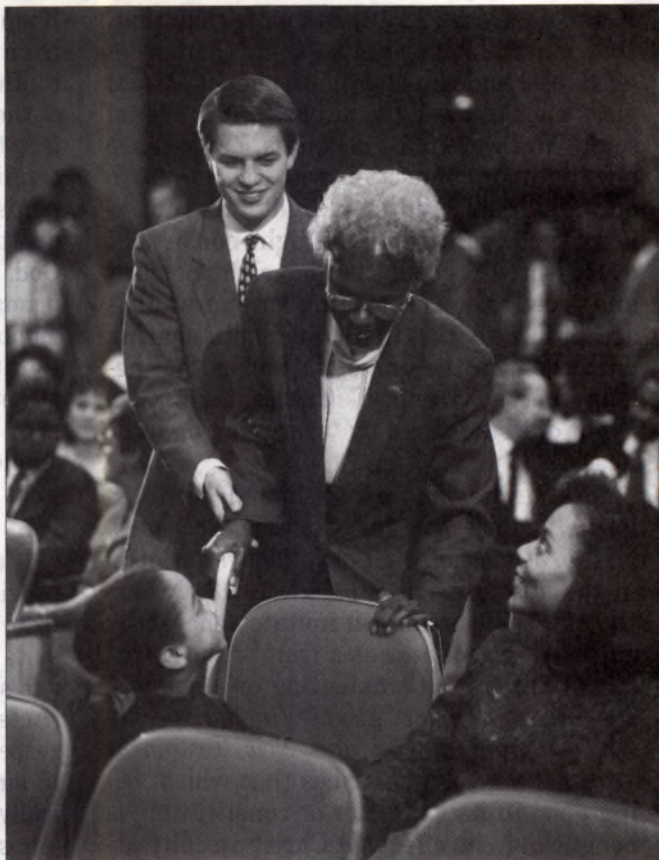
"Continue Becoming Merciful"

⁹ A further sort of goodness is seen in

7. In what ways can we show consideration for the elderly?

8. How may we show consideration to another deserving group singled out in the Bible?

9, 10. Why should Christians be merciful, and how can this sort of goodness be shown?



some of Jesus' parables. In one of these, Jesus told of a Samaritan who came across a man who had been robbed, badly beaten, and left lying on the road. A Levite and a priest had walked by the injured man, refusing to help him. But the Samaritan stopped and gave him succor, doing more than may have been reasonably expected. The story is often called the parable of the Good Samaritan. What sort of goodness did the Samaritan manifest? Mercy. When Jesus asked his listener to identify who proved to be the neighbor of the wounded man, the correct answer was given: "The one that acted mercifully toward him."—Luke 10:37.

¹⁰ Merciful Christians imitate Jehovah, of whom Moses said to the Israelites: "Jehovah

your God is a merciful God. He will not desert you or bring you to ruin or forget the covenant of your forefathers that he swore to them." (Deuteronomy 4:31) Jesus showed how God's mercy should affect us: "Continue becoming merciful, just as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36) How can we show mercy? As Jesus' parable indicated, one way is to be ready to help our fellow, even if it involves risk or inconvenience. A good person will not ignore the suffering of his brother if he is in a position to do something about it.—James 2:15, 16.

¹¹ Another of Jesus' parables showed that merciful goodness includes a readiness to forgive others. He told of a slave who owed his master ten thousand talents. Unable to pay, the slave begged for mercy, and his master kindly forgave that huge debt of 60,000,000 denarii. But the slave went off and found another slave who owed him only a hundred denarii. The forgiven slave mercilessly threw the debtor into prison until he could pay. Clearly, the merciless slave was not a good man, and when the master heard what had happened, he called him to account.—Matthew 18:23-35.

¹² We are in a situation similar to that of the forgiven slave. On the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, Jehovah has forgiven a huge debt of sin on our account. Surely, then, we should be ready to forgive others. Jesus said that we should be ready to forgive "up to seventy-seven times," without limit. (Matthew 5:7; 6:12, 14, 15; 18:21, 22) Hence, a merciful Christian will not carry a grudge. He will not harbor resentment or refuse to talk to a fellow Christian because of bad feelings. Such lack of mercy is not a mark of Christian goodness.

Generous and Hospitable

¹³ Goodness is manifested also by gener-

11, 12. According to Jesus' parable of the slaves, what does mercy include, and how can we manifest this today?

13. What else does goodness include?

osity and hospitality. On one occasion a young man came to Jesus for counsel. He said: "Teacher, what good must I do in order to get everlasting life?" Jesus told him that he should observe God's commandments continually. Yes, obedience to Jehovah's commands is an aspect of goodness. The young man thought he was already doing this as best he could. Clearly, to his neighbors he already seemed to be a good person, yet he felt he lacked something. So Jesus said: "If you want to be perfect, go sell your belongings and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, and come be my follower." (Matthew 19:16-22) The young man went away grieved. He was very wealthy. If he had followed Jesus' counsel, he would have shown that he was not materialistic. And he would have performed a good act of truly selfless generosity.

¹⁴ Jehovah urged the Israelites to be generous. For example, we read: "You should by all means give to [your poverty-stricken neighbor], and your heart should not be stingy in your giving to him, because on this account Jehovah your God will bless you in every deed of yours and in every undertaking of yours." (Deuteronomy 15:10; Proverbs 11:25) Jesus Christ personally urged generosity: "Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing." (Luke 6:38) Moreover, Jesus was personally very generous. On one occasion, he had set aside time to rest a little. Crowds found out where he was and came to him. Jesus generously forgot about resting and expended himself in behalf of the crowd. Later, he showed outstanding hospitality in providing food for that large crowd.—Mark 6:30-44.

¹⁵ Faithful to the counsel of Jehovah and

14. What fine counsel did both Jehovah and Jesus give regarding generosity?

15. How did Jesus' disciples set an excellent example in displaying generosity?

of Jesus, many of Jesus' disciples were notably generous and hospitable. In the first days of the Christian congregation, a large number of those who had come to celebrate Pentecost in 33 C.E. heard the preaching of the apostles and became believers. Staying on after the feast in order to learn more, they ran low on provisions. Therefore, local believers sold their property and contributed the money to sustain their new brothers so that these could become better established in the faith. What generosity!—Acts 4:32-35; see also Acts 16:15; Romans 15:26.

¹⁶ Today, a similar Christlike generosity is seen when Christians contribute time and money to their local congregations and to the worldwide preaching work. It is evidenced when they come to the relief of brothers suffering from natural disaster or war. It is manifested when the circuit overseer is cared for during his regular visit. Or when "fatherless boys" (and fatherless girls) are generously invited to share in recreation and family Bible studies with other Christian families, this too is hospitality, a manifestation of Christian goodness.—Psalm 68:5.

Telling the Truth

¹⁷ When Paul described the fruitage of the light, he linked goodness with righteousness and truth, and it would be correct to say that truthfulness is another sort of goodness. Good people do not tell lies. Nevertheless, telling the truth is a special challenge today when lying is so prevalent. Many individuals lie when they fill out their tax returns. Employees lie about the work they do. Students lyingly cheat in their lessons and exams. Businessmen lie when setting up deals. Children lie to escape punishment.

16. Name some of the ways that we today can be hospitable and generous.

17. Why is truthfulness a challenge today?

Malicious gossipers lyingly ruin the reputations of others.

¹⁸ Lying is repugnant to Jehovah. Among the 'seven things' that he hates are "a false tongue" and "a false witness that launches forth lies." (Proverbs 6:16-19) "All the liars" are listed among the cowards, the murderers, and the fornicators, who will have no place in God's new world. (Revelation 21:8) Further, the proverb tells us: "The one walking in his uprightness is fearing Jehovah, but the one crooked in his ways is despising Him." (Proverbs 14:2) A liar is crooked in his ways. Hence, a liar gives evidence of despising Jehovah. What a terrible thought! Let us always tell the truth, even if it leads to our being disciplined or losing out financially. (Proverbs 16:6; Ephesians 4:25) Those who tell the truth imitate Jehovah, "the God of truth."—Psalm 31:5.

Cultivate Goodness

¹⁹ These are just a few of the 'sorts' of goodness that a Christian should cultivate. It is true that people in the world manifest

18. How does Jehovah view liars?

19. What is sometimes seen in the world, reflecting credit on the Creator?

Can You Answer?

- ☐ How can we keep doing good with respect to the superior authorities?
- ☐ Who, among others, are deserving of our consideration?
- ☐ In what ways does mercy manifest itself?
- ☐ What acts of generosity and hospitality mark Christians today?
- ☐ How can goodness be cultivated?

**As the Great Teacher,
Jesus gave generously
of himself**

goodness to a degree. Some are hospitable, for example, and others are merciful. Indeed, what made the parable of the Good Samaritan so remarkable was that Jesus told of a non-Jew who showed mercy when elders in the Jewish congregation did not. It is indeed a tribute to man's Creator that such traits still appear naturally in some humans even after six thousand years of imperfection.

²⁰ Nevertheless, for Christians goodness is more than just a quality that they might or might not possess. It is a quality they must cultivate in all its aspects, since they have to be imitators of God. How is this possible? The Bible tells us that we can *learn* goodness. "Teach me goodness," the psalmist prayed to God. How? He continued: "For in your commandments I have exercised faith." He added: "You are good and are doing good. Teach me your regulations."—Psalm 119:66, 68.

²¹ Yes, if we learn Jehovah's commandments and obey them, we will cultivate goodness. Always remember that goodness is a fruit of the spirit. If we seek Jehovah's

20, 21. (a) Why is Christian goodness different from any goodness we may see in people of the world? (b) How can a Christian cultivate goodness, and why should we be diligent to do so?



spirit through prayer, association, and Bible study, then we will surely be helped to cultivate this quality. Moreover, goodness is powerful. It can even conquer evil. (Romans 12:21) How vital it is, then, that we do good to all, especially to our Christian brothers. (Galatians 6:10) If we do so, we will be among those who enjoy the "glory and honor and peace" that is promised for "everyone who works what is good."—Romans 2:6-11.



JEHOVAH

“A Manly Person of War”

THE elite forces of the Egyptian army had been obliterated. Along the Red Sea, bodies of charioteers and cavalymen were being tossed by the surf, and military equipment littered the shore. Led by Moses, the men of Israel exulted in a victory song: “Let me sing to Jehovah, for he has become highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has pitched into the sea. Jehovah is a manly person of war. Jehovah is his name.”—Exodus 15:1, 3.

Jehovah’s victory at the Red Sea was indeed a demonstration of his superiority in warfare. Israel had left Egypt in battle formation but with little fighting capability. By a pillar of cloud that became a pillar

of fire by night, Jehovah had led them from Rameses to “the edge of the wilderness” at Etham. (Exodus 12:37; 13:18, 20-22) Then Jehovah said to Moses: “Speak to the sons of Israel, that they should turn back and encamp before Pihahiroth between Migdol and the sea in view of Baal-zephon. . . . Then Pharaoh will certainly say respecting the sons of Israel, ‘They are wandering in confusion in the land.’ . . . And he will certainly chase after them.” (Exodus 14:1-4) Obediently, Israel did an about-face and trekked to Pihahiroth. Pharaoh’s spies reported the seeming confusion, and as foretold, Pharaoh mobilized his army for pursuit.—Exodus 14:5-9.



Route of the Exodus from Egypt

—some three million strong—to pass through in battle formation. To the left and to the right of the Israelite column, the “congealed” water stood like two huge walls.—Exodus 15:8.

The Israelites, aided by the light from the pillar of fire, escaped over the wind-dried seabed. By morning, the last of the Israelites had emerged on the opposite shore. “And the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all the horses of Pharaoh, his war chariots and his cavalymen began going in after them, into the midst of the sea.” The pursuers had rushed into a trap!—Exodus 14:23.

“[Jehovah] went throwing the camp of the Egyptians into confusion. And he kept taking wheels off their chariots so that they were driving them with difficulty.” Moses now stretched out his hand over the sea, and “the sea began to come back to its normal condition.” The walls of water collapsed and began engulfing the Egyptians. They tried to flee, “but Jehovah shook [them] off into the midst of the sea.” None survived! In jubilation the Israelites sang their song of triumph to Jehovah.—Exodus 14:24-15:3; Psalm 106:11.

Jehovah Fights for Joshua

Jehovah proved to be “a manly person of war” in other battles. One was the battle at Ai. The first attack on the city failed because of Achan’s serious wrongdoing. When this matter was corrected, Jehovah issued battle orders to Joshua.—Joshua 7:1, 4, 5, 11-26; 8:1, 2.

Following Jehovah’s instructions, at night Joshua set an ambush at the rear of the city, on its west side. His main force was moved north to a valley just outside of

A Trap—For Israel or for Pharaoh?

Hemmed in by mountains on either side, the sea in front, and the Egyptians behind, the frightened Israelites appeared trapped, so they called out to God for help. Rallying the people, Moses said: “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will perform for you today. For the Egyptians whom you do see today you will not see again, no, never again. *Jehovah will himself fight for you*, and you yourselves will be silent.” (Exodus 14:10-14) True to that promise, “the pillar of cloud departed from their van and stood in the rear of them. So it came in between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. . . . And this group did not come near that group all night long.”—Exodus 14:15-20.

As Jehovah directed, Moses lifted up his rod over the sea and “split it apart” that the Israelites might escape. And an astonishing miracle took place! (Exodus 14:16, 21) A powerful wind from the east began splitting the waters of the Red Sea, forming a channel wide enough for the entire nation



◀ Here, in the area of Ai, Jehovah led Joshua and His people to a stunning victory

▼ The water of the Kishon rose quickly, contributing to the defeat of Jehovah's enemies

Photos: Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.



Ai and appeared poised for a frontal attack. The men of Ai went for the bait. Still flushed with the success of their previous encounter, they rushed headlong out of the city against the Israelites. Feigning retreat, the Israelites fell back along "the way of the wilderness," drawing the enemy yet farther from Ai.—Joshua 8:3-17.

At just the right moment, Jehovah said to Joshua: "Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for into your hand I shall give it." At this signal, the men in ambush fell upon the city, putting it to sword and flame. Seeing the smoke, the enemy forces outside became completely demoralized. Joshua, switching from retreat to attack, trapped the foe between his two forces. A human victory? No. The Isra-

elites won because, as Joshua later said to them: "Jehovah your God was the one who was fighting for you."—Joshua 8:18-27; 23:3.

The Battle at the Kishon

Jehovah's superiority in battle was again demonstrated at the Kishon Valley, near Megiddo. Canaanite king Jabin had oppressed Israel for 20 years. His army, under the command of Sisera, included 900 war chariots with iron scythes on their wheels—a seemingly invincible force in those days.—Judges 4:1-3.

Nevertheless, through the prophetess Deborah, Jehovah summoned Judge Barak to assemble ten thousand warriors on top of Mount Tabor to challenge Jabin's forces.

Sisera quickly reacted to this military buildup, rushing from Harosheth to the torrent valley of Kishon, between Mount Tabor and Megiddo. He no doubt reasoned that here on flat ground, Israel's poorly equipped foot soldiers would have no chance against his chariots. He did not reckon, though, on fighting a heavenly Foe. —Judges 4:4-7, 12, 13.

Jehovah commanded Barak to move from the secure heights of Tabor into the valley plain, luring Sisera's troops into battle. Then Jehovah struck! A flash flood turned the battlefield into a quagmire, immobilizing Sisera's troops. In the ensuing panic, Israel's foot soldiers easily routed their enemy. "All the camp of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword. Not as much as one remained." The swollen floodwaters of the Kishon had bogged down the Canaanite chariots and may have swept some corpses away. —Judges 4:14-16; 5:20, 21.

Victory Against Gog and His Crowd

These ancient events provided foregleams of Jehovah's greatest victory yet to come. Looming on the horizon is a battle that will take place "in the final part of the years." According to Ezekiel's prophecy, Gog, a symbol of "the ruler of this world," Satan the Devil, will mobilize an international attack force. He will direct his troops to invade the figurative "mountains of Israel," that is, the elevated spiritual estate of the Christian "Israel of God." —Ezekiel 38:1-9; John 12:31; Galatians 6:16.

What tempts Gog to make this all-out attack on God's people? The prophecy points to their peaceful, spiritually prosperous condition. Says Gog: "I shall go up against the land of open rural country. I shall come in upon those having no disturbance, dwelling in security, all of them dwelling without wall, and they do not have even bar and doors.' It will be to get a big

spoil and to do much plundering . . . [of] a people . . . that is accumulating wealth and property." —Ezekiel 38:10-12.

In general, Jehovah's people are not wealthy in a material way. However, they have produced abundant spiritual wealth as a result of their worldwide preaching work. "A great crowd . . . out of all nations" has been gathered, now numbering over four million. (Revelation 7:9, 10) Wealth indeed! Satan—furious over this spiritual prosperity—attempts to exterminate God's people.

But by coming in upon the figurative soil of Israel, Gog, in effect, attacks Jehovah God himself. "My rage will come up into my nose," says Jehovah, who will retaliate in behalf of his people. Gog's armies will dissolve in chaos. "Against his own brother the sword of each one will come to be." Jehovah then unleashes his destructive powers—"a flooding downpour and hailstones, fire and sulphur." As at the Red Sea, Ai, and the Kishon, Jehovah will once again fight for his people and glorify his name. "I shall certainly magnify myself and sanctify myself and make myself known before the eyes of many nations; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah." —Ezekiel 38:18-23.

The historic record of Jehovah's battles in ancient times gives us reason for total confidence in this future victory during the "great tribulation." (Matthew 24:21, 22) Always in control, Jehovah can outthink his enemies and maneuver circumstances for the salvation of his people. Indeed, it will prove to be as Isaiah prophesied: "Like a mighty man Jehovah himself will go forth. Like a warrior he will awaken zeal. He will shout, yes, he will let out a war cry; over his enemies he will show himself mightier." (Isaiah 42:13) In the eyes of his Witnesses, he will for all time be JEHOVAH, THE "MANLY PERSON OF WAR"! —Exodus 15:3.

Do You Remember?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

□ **What basis do spiritual shepherds have for taking the initiative to contact some disfellowshipped ones to see if they might be moved to repent?**

Even while the Israelites were in exile and yet unrepentant, Jehovah, like a shepherd, took the initiative to search for them, sending his prophets to them. Christian shepherds are interested in helping any repentant ones who might be like lost sheep. (Compare Luke 15:4-7.)—4/15, pages 21-3.

□ **How does Jesus' illustration of the prodigal son show what our feelings and actions should be when someone is reinstated in the Christian congregation? (Luke 15:22-32)**

Our goal ought to be to imitate the father, who showed happiness at the return of his prodigal son. Hence, we should freely speak with the reinstated brother and encourage him now to make progress in the truth.—4/15, page 25.

□ **What practical precautions can be taken to avoid becoming a victim of crime?**

Whenever possible, avoid being out in dangerous areas at nighttime. Conceal your jewelry, and carry such items as cameras in a shopping bag. Be cautious about walking right along the edge of a sidewalk, especially if you are carrying a briefcase or a bag. (See Proverbs 3:21-23.)—5/1, pages 5-6.

□ **Why does the prophecy at Zephaniah 2:3 say: "Pro-**

ably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger"?

Salvation to life depends on faithfulness and endurance. (Matthew 24:13) Hence, only those who conform to God's righteous standards and keep speaking the pure language will be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger. (Zephaniah 2:1, 2)—5/1, page 14.

□ **What is involved in putting God first in family life?**

Parents and children must worship Jehovah and measure up to his standards as set out in the Bible.—5/15, page 5.

□ **Why has Jehovah not immediately punished sinners?**

One reason is that God's name must be made known in all the earth. (Compare Romans 9:17.) Another is to allow time for settling the issues of God's sovereignty and man's integrity, which resulted from the rebellion in Eden. Also, God's long-suffering gives erring ones the opportunity to repent and to mend their ways. (2 Peter 3:9)—5/15, pages 11-12.

□ **What facts testify that the Bible is of superhuman origin?**

The Bible was written by some 40 different writers, who were from all walks of life and who lived over a period of 1,600 years; yet all these writers followed one basic theme. This internal harmony of the Bible would be impossible if left to chance or mere human direction.—6/1, page 5.

□ **What strange deed and unusual work, foretold at Isaiah 28:21, will Jehovah perform in our day?**

The warning at Revelation 17:16 shows that Babylon the Great's political paramours will one day turn on her. As a result, Christendom will be completely destroyed along with all the other false religions. This will be Jehovah's strange deed and his unusual work for our day.—6/1, pages 22-3.

□ **What should Christian women bear in mind regarding the use of jewelry and makeup?**

The Bible does not forbid employing such beauty aids. (Exodus 32:2, 3; Esther 2:7, 12, 15) But modesty should prevail. A woman could easily come to imitate worldly styles, using an excess of lipstick, cheek coloring, or eye shadow, even as did Jezebel. (2 Kings 9:30) Care needs to be taken so that cosmetics are not applied with a heavy hand and the jewelry used is not gaudy.—6/1, pages 30-1.

□ **How did the Israelites escape "all the evil diseases of Egypt" that were prevalent in early times? (Deuteronomy 7:15)**

Apparently they escaped such ailments largely because of observing the advanced hygienic practices commanded in the Law covenant.—6/15, page 4.

□ **Why has God decreed that humans must not eat blood? (Genesis 9:3, 4; Leviticus 17:10, 11; Acts 15:22-29)**

Life is a gift from God and human life depends on the life-sustaining liquid tissue called blood. (Psalm 36:9) By respecting blood as special, humans show their dependence on God for life. Therefore, the central reason for God's decree regarding blood was, not that taking in

blood could be unhealthy, but that blood had special meaning to God.—6/15, pages 8-9.

□ How may Christian parents and youths fortify the likelihood that a minor's objection to blood transfusion will be respected?

Though not legally an adult, a Christian youth should be able to explain clearly and firmly what his strong religious objection is to taking blood. Parents can hold practice sessions with their children so that these gain experience in explaining their own convictions.—6/15, page 18.

□ How were women greatly blessed during Jesus' earthly ministry?

Jesus began a work that brought comfort, hope, and a new dignity to women of all races. He taught women deep spiritual truths. (John 4:7, 24-26) During his ministry, he accepted the ministration of women as he traveled

throughout the land. (Mark 15: 40, 41)—7/1, pages 14-15.

□ What teaching techniques of Jesus have parents found effective with their children?

Parents do well to use illustrations to make Christian truths appeal to the hearts of their young children, and they may use well-thought-out questions to discern what their older children are really thinking. (Compare Matthew 17:24-27.)—7/1, page 26.

□ Why should we pursue loving-kindness?

The quality of loving-kindness endears us to God and to others. It promotes hospitality and makes us more considerate. It strengthens the bonds within the family and the Christian congregation. Above all, loving-kindness brings glory to Jehovah.—7/15, page 22.

□ Why is it possible for a Christian to be misled in the matter of association? (1 Corinthians 15:33)

A person may appear friendly and agreeable, but if he does not share the Christian's concern for Jehovah's service or even believe the Bible, he is a bad associate. Why? Because his life is based on different principles, and things that are important to a Christian may have little meaning to him.—7/15, page 23.

□ Why is Judgment Day a time of hope?

Judgment Day is a period of a thousand years. It will be presided over by God himself with his Son, Christ Jesus, appointed by God to act as Judge. This will be a time to restore to mankind the perfect human life that Adam lost for his offspring. (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22)—8/1, pages 5-7.

Do You Deny Sinful Tendencies?

"I FIND, then, this law in my case: that when I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me. I really delight in the law of God according to the man I am within, but I behold in my members another law warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to sin's law that is in my members."—Romans 7:21-23.

It took humility for the apostle Paul to admit the above. Yet, by his doing so, he helped to prevent his imperfect tendencies from overcoming him.

It is similar with true Christians today. When we came to an accurate knowledge

of Bible truth, we made necessary changes in our life-style, conforming to Jehovah's standards. Sinful tendencies remain, though, "because the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up." (Genesis 8:21) Are we honest enough to admit to ourselves the specific tendencies that exert pressure on us? Or do we deny that we have them, perhaps concluding, "These may be problem areas for others but not for me?"

Such self-deception can be fatal. A Bible-based illustration may help us to appreciate the need to acknowledge our sinful tendencies and to keep them in check.

Why Denial Is Deadly

In Bible times many cities were protected by walls. The gates—frequently made of wood—were a relatively vulnerable part of a city's inner wall; therefore, they were most vigorously defended. The inhabitants constructed only as many gates as necessary for the traffic during peacetime. Wooden gates were often covered with metal, to resist damage from fire. Towers were built into the walls so that watchmen posted on them could see approaching enemies at a distance.

Now think: What would happen if the inhabitants of a city denied the vulnerability of the city's gates and so did not provide adequate protection? Enemy soldiers would have easy access to the city, leading to its defeat.

So it is with us. Jehovah knows our individual points of vulnerability. "There is not a creation that is not manifest to his sight, but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting." (Hebrews 4:13) Satan too may have observed some sinful tendency in us, be it toward distorting the truth, quickness of temper, interest in sexual immorality, materialism, pride, or something else. If we deny that we have sinful tendencies, we make ourselves all the more vulnerable to Satan's attacks on our faith. (1 Peter 5:8)

In Our Next Issue

■ **Looking Beyond Man-Made
"Peace and Security"**

■ **'Sowing With Tears and
Reaping With a Joyful Cry'**

■ **Jehovah and Christ
—Foremost Communicators**

We may be overcome as wrong desires push beyond mere tendencies and give birth to sin. (James 1:14, 15) We need to be like Paul, honestly acknowledging any 'gates of wood' that may exist.

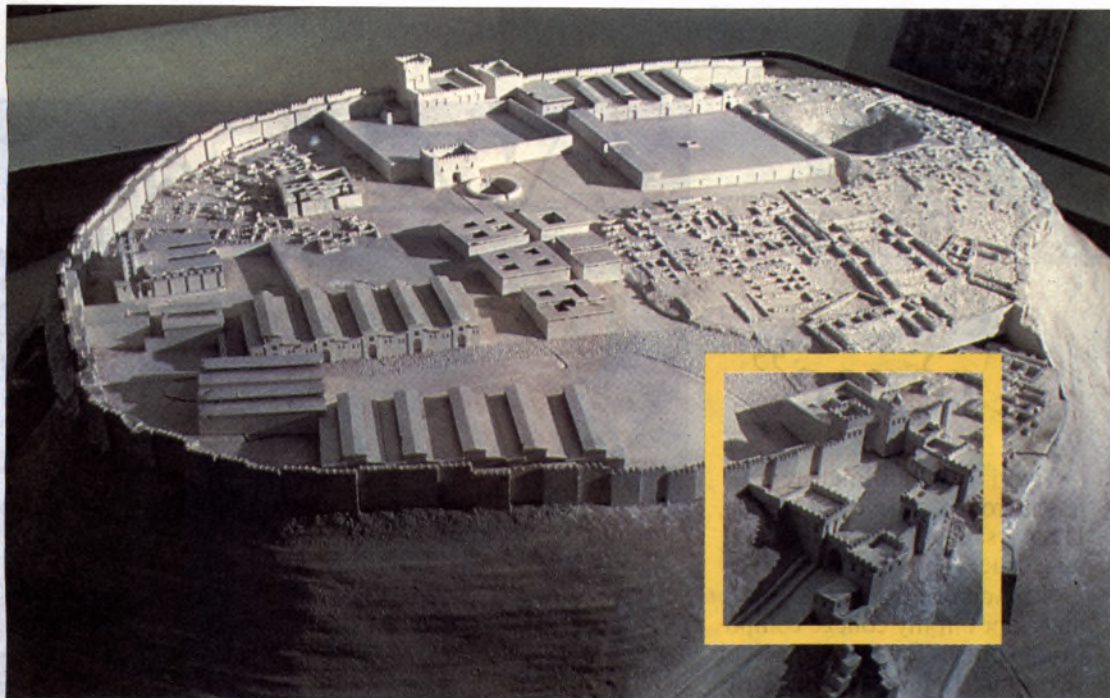
Fortify Yourself!

It would be futile to identify wrong leanings but then to do nothing about them. This would be like a man who looks at himself in the mirror, notes areas in need of attention, and walks away without making needed corrections. (James 1:23-25) Yes, we need to take action in protecting ourselves from being overtaken by sinful tendencies. How can we do this?

Often, in Bible times, smaller towns, or "dependent towns," were unwalled. (Numbers 21:25, 32; Judges 1:27; 1 Chronicles 18:1; Jeremiah 49:2) Inhabitants of these towns could flee to a walled city in the event of enemy attack. Fortified cities thus served as a refuge for the people in the surrounding area.

The Bible describes Jehovah God as a tower, a refuge, a wall to whom we can run for protection. (Proverbs 18:10; Zechariah 2:4, 5) So Jehovah is the prime defense of his servants. Incessant prayer to him is very necessary. (1 Thessalonians 5:17) Another aid is the Bible. Using God's Word, we do well to make a special study of those areas in which we are weak. We may also set aside for repeated examination Bible-based articles that deal with our individual 'gates of wood.'

Also, like watchmen in a tower, we can see the enemy from a distance, as it were, and act accordingly. How? By avoiding circumstances in which we may face temptation or pressure. For example, a person working toward moderation in drinking alcoholic beverages will wisely choose to avoid places where access to these beverages is common or is even encouraged.



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All of this requires effort. However, if the apostle Paul had to ‘pummel his body’ in order to resist imperfect leanings, do we not also need to put forth effort? Such conscious attention to our sinful tendencies will reflect that we are following the apostle Peter’s direction: “Do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace.”—1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Peter 3:14.

Acknowledge and Act

Do not become discouraged if, despite your efforts, all your imperfect tendencies do not disappear. As long as we are imperfect, wrong leanings will to some degree always be present, as was true in Paul’s case. But we need to keep working to suppress these, to keep them from giving birth to sin.

Be conscious, however, of the difference between accepting the reality of imperfec-

This model of Megiddo illustrates the fortified gates and protective walls of ancient cities

tion and tolerating it. That might be illustrated by a man who has within his chest a weak heart. He should face this reality by attempting to keep his heart in as good a condition as he can hope to. He does not reason that since his literal heart is weak, he may as well cast off all restraint and live however he pleases.

Know, then, that our strength does not lie in blindly denying sinful tendencies but in acknowledging them and taking action against these. So do not be afraid to admit to yourself and to Jehovah areas wherein you are easily tempted and pressured. You need not like yourself less for doing so, nor will Jehovah’s love for you diminish. In fact, as you draw closer to God in earnest concern for his approval, he will draw even closer to you.—James 4:8.

"The Crème de la Crème"

That is what an English professor from a college in Georgia, U.S.A., said about the *Awake!* magazine. He wrote recently:

"I have been using *Awake!* magazines in my college composition courses for the past seven years, and I must say, your writers are the crème de la crème. The interest-arousing introductions and the vivid detail contained in many of the articles are excellent examples for beginning, intermediate, and advanced writers.

"The articles in *Awake!* not only are entertaining and informative but also are of the highest grammatical quality. I use them to cite proper use of punctuation, idiomatic expressions, figurative language, and diction. The exposure to new words the reader gets is indeed a challenging, yet refreshing, change from the average newsmagazine. The success of *Awake!* gives evidence of the quality time and attention put into each issue."



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