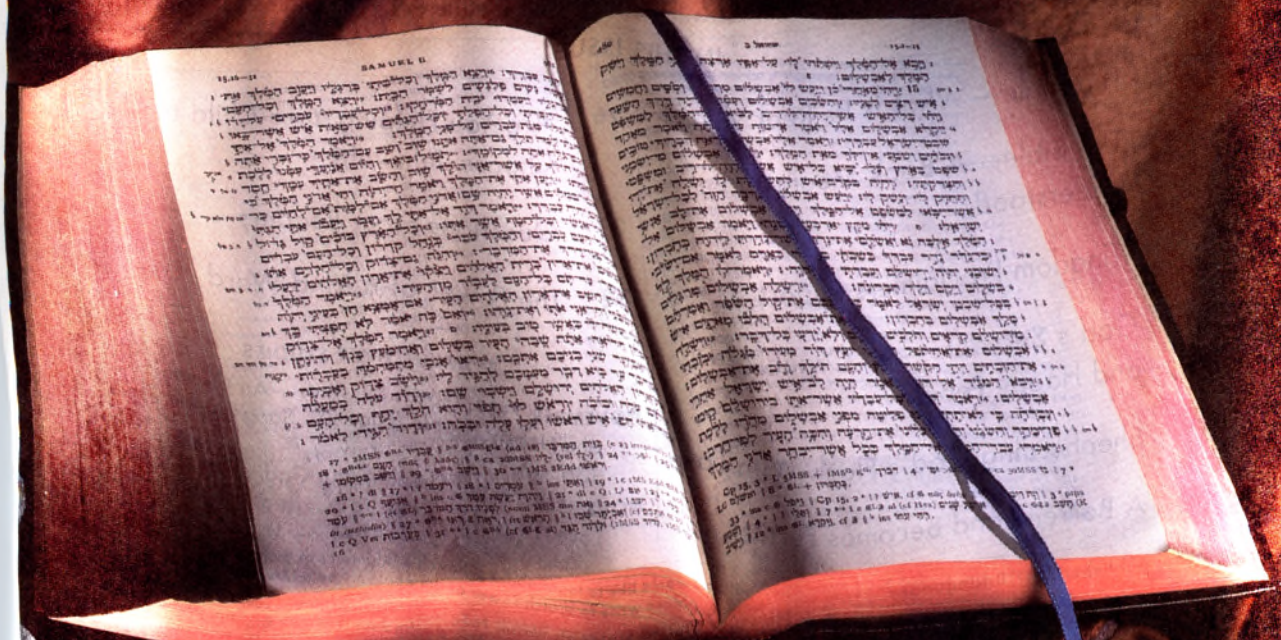
OCTOBER 1, 1994

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



THE BIBLE

What Is Its Real Value?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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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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THE BIBLE
What is its real value?

"THE Bible is a mystery, a book that was not meant to be understood," claims a householder. Another remarks: "I know that the Bible is an important book, but I don't know much about it. It's hard to understand."

"Many Christians know . . . little about the Bible," stated *The Toronto Star*. A Catholic lady commented: "Having a Bible makes me feel good. It brings inner peace." "The Bible is like a compass that guides one through the rough, stormy sea of life to a place of safety," says a fisherman. In the words of a former Hindu, "the Bible is God's Word and a gift to mankind and is medication for spiritual sufferings."

Opinions on the Bible's true value are many and varied. What, though, is its real value?

The Bible is the most important and widely distributed book in existence. Within its pages lie the answers to the most perplexing problems that man has experienced or will yet face. The practicality of its counsel is unequaled. The moral standards it advocates are unsurpassed. Its message is powerful and beneficial. This book of incomparable value deserves to be taken off our shelves and given careful attention and scrutiny.

We can open the Bible with full confidence that it is completely accurate, reliable, and authentic. The historical happenings recorded in it are confirmed by secular history. Repeatedly, archaeological findings corroborate that the Bible is factual and truthful. The candor of the 40 or so Bible writers stamps them as men of honesty and integrity. The internal harmony of the Bible indicates that it is not of human origin. The events recorded in it are real. The people it speaks about are real. The places and locations it refers to are real. Furthermore, the Bible contains outstanding prophecies that undeniably identify Jehovah God as the Author of the Bible.—2 Peter 1:21.

Our Grand Instructor made sure that knowledge of his will and purposes would be available to those who wanted to know of such. In fact, Jehovah tells us in clear language that it is his will that all sorts of men study his Word and "come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:3, 4; Proverbs 1:5, 20-33) This is one of the most important things we can do with our life. It is a challenge we are obligated to face. The early Christians understood this. One of them was moved to say: "This is what I continue praying, that your love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment; that you may make sure of the more important things."—Philippians 1:9, 10; Colossians 1:9, 10.

The Bible is the Creator's prime means of communicating his will and purpose to the human family, and it explains how we individually fit into that purpose. In it are recorded happenings of the past, and it gives a clear vision of the future. The Bible outlines correct doctrine and sets us straight as to what we should or should not believe. (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17) It provides rules of

conduct by which man should live, and it directs humans in the way of success and happiness. (Matthew, chapters 5 to 7) It emphasizes God's Kingdom as the only hope for all mankind and shows how his government is the instrument to sanctify his name and vindicate his sovereignty. The Bible explains the course we need to pursue to enjoy a close, loving relationship with our Life-Giver, Jehovah.

Furthermore, the Bible stands alone as the book that will lead you to the greatest prize mankind will ever receive—everlasting life on a paradise earth as perfect humans. (Romans 6:23) Jehovah's only-begotten Son tells us: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Surely a book of such great value should motivate us to learn what we must do to gain the prize of everlasting life. The Bible is a book meant to be understood, as the next article will show.

THE BIBLE
A book meant to be understood

SOME people believe that the Bible is the clear Word of God that should be followed literally. For others, "the message of the Bible is much more ambiguous." So says the 12-member faith and theology committee for Canada's largest Protestant denomination. Clergyman Clifford Elliott, of the United Church, feels that to some "the Bible becomes abstract, impersonal and irrelevant."

Such views raise pertinent questions that deserve answers. Important among these are, Why was the Bible written? Is it too puzzling and complex to be understood? Can the average person understand it? What help is needed for one to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures? And why is an accurate knowledge of the Bible essential in these turbulent times?

Why Was the Bible Written?

A study of God's Word has always been a prerequisite for those who would gain the favor and approval of the Most High God, Jehovah. Kings, priests, parents, men, women, and children—rich and poor alike—were instructed to take time from the everyday affairs of life to give serious and prayerful consideration to the recorded Word of God.—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; 17:18-20; 31:9-12; Nehemiah 8:8; Psalm 1:1, 2; 119:7-11, 72, 98-100, 104, 142; Proverbs 3:13-18.

For example, Joshua was directed: "Be sure that the book of the Law is always read in your worship. Study it day and night, and make sure that you obey everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." (Joshua 1:8, *Today's En-*

glish Version) Such careful study and application of the Law of God would result in success and happiness. Jehovah intended that "all sorts of men" would not only understand his Word, the Bible, but also obey it, with the prospect of receiving the gift of life.—1 Timothy 2:3, 4; John 17:3.

Too Complex to Be Understood?

Before Jesus' ascension to heaven, he made it clear that he wanted a great program of Bible education to continue earth wide. (Acts 1:8) He knew that the Bible was meant to be understood. After explaining that Jehovah had given him all authority in heaven and on earth, he issued the direct command: "Go therefore and make disciples [or, learners] of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

Prior to baptism, new disciples had to be taught about Jehovah, his Son, and the operation of the holy spirit. Additionally, they had to be instructed in the law of the Christian system of things. (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2) To achieve this result, deserving ones needed to believe first that the Bible was from Jehovah and second that it was meant to be understood.—Matthew 10:11-13.

What is required on your part to understand the Bible? The Son of God went out of his way to explain the Scriptures. He knew that the Holy Writings are true and that they contain the expressed will of Jehovah. (John 17:17) Regarding his assignment of work, Jesus Christ said: "I was born and came into the world for this one purpose, to speak about the truth. Whoever belongs to the truth listens to me." (John 18:37, *TEV;* Luke 4:43) Jesus did not hold back from teaching those with receptive hearts and minds. At Luke 24:45, we are told: "Then he [Christ Jesus] opened up their minds fully to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures."

During Jesus' ministry he quoted freely from the written Word, explaining and referring to scriptures in "the law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms." (Luke 24: 27, 44) Those who heard his Scriptural explanations were greatly moved by his clarity of understanding, as well as by his ability to teach. (Matthew 7:28, 29; Mark 1:22; Luke 4:32; 24:32) To him, the Scriptures were an open book.

The Bible and Jesus' Followers

The apostle Paul, an imitator of Jesus Christ, saw the need to teach others what the Scriptures contain. He too knew that they were meant to be understood. That is why he taught publicly and undoubtedly explained the Scriptures in the homes of those who wanted to understand them. Paul made his position known when he said: "You know that I did not hold back anything that would be of help to you as I preached and taught in public and in your homes." (Acts 20:20, *TEV*) During his discussions he reasoned from the Scriptures, explaining and proving his points with references. (Acts 17:2, 3) He was interested in helping others understand the meaning of the Scriptures.

Do you have a longing to understand the things Jesus and his disciples taught? (1 Peter 2:2) The inhabitants of ancient Beroea had such a desire, and they were eager to believe what the apostle Paul was teaching them about the Christ. So they were encouraged to study the Scriptures daily and thus be assured that the good news they heard was indeed the truth. Because their minds were receptive, "many of them became believers."—Acts 17:11, 12.

To understand the Bible, one has to have the right heart condition, a sincere desire to learn, and a 'consciousness of one's spiritual need.' (Matthew 5:3) When Jesus was asked: "Why is it you speak to them by the use of illustrations?" he answered: "To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, but to those people it is not granted." It was foretold that he would 'open his mouth with illustrations and publish things hidden.' (Matthew 13:10, 11, 35) So Jesus spoke by means of illustrations to separate the casual and curious listener from the sincere inquirer. Jesus' disciples showed their sincerity on one occasion when they went along with him into a house and said: "Explain to us the illustration of the weeds in the field." —Matthew 13:36.

It is obvious that we need help if we are to understand the Bible. Clergyman Hal Llewellyn, the United Church's secretary of theology, faith, and ecumenism, said: "It is very important to clarify what the Bible means to us and how it is read and interpreted." But even if not all realize it, the fact is that we cannot understand the Bible on our own. We need help.

What Help Is Available?

There are in the Bible some puzzling sayings, perplexing questions, and profound statements that require unraveling. They may be intentionally obscure, employing meaningful comparisons that were not meant to be understood at the time they were written. But they did involve Jehovah's purposes. For example, Revelation 13:18 says that "the number of the wild beast" is "six hundred and sixty-six." While the verse says that "here is where wisdom comes in," it does not explain the significance of that number. Jehovah, through his organization, however, has allowed his loyal servants to understand its meaning today. (See box, "Channel to Understanding the Bible.") You too can gain this understanding with the assistance of those who are experienced in "handling the word of the truth aright."—2 Timothy 2:2, 15, 23-25; 4:2-5; Proverbs 2:1-5.

Jesus sometimes used illustrations to show the response or lack of response to the Kingdom message. He indicated that some would not progress because of their being discouraged by opposition from friends and relatives. Others would allow "tribulation or persecution" to destroy their appreciation of the Kingdom message. Still others would permit the everyday affairs of life, "the anxiety of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches," to crowd out whatever love they may have for the good news. On the other hand, there are those who gladly respond and are willing to hear the precious word and get the sense of it. They are "sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done" in Christendom, supposedly in the name of Jesus Christ. Such ones are anxious to be instructed in Jehovah's way and therefore to understand what they are reading in the Bible.—Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; Ezekiel 9:4; Isaiah 2:2-4.

To those who want to gain insight into Jehovah's purposes on an individual basis, Jehovah can see to it that the necessary assistance is provided. To illustrate, the Bible reports that Jehovah's spirit directed the evangelist Philip to assist an Ethiopian man who was considering the Bible book of Isaiah as he traveled from Jerusalem. On his way home, he was reading it in his chariot. In obedience to the leading of Jehovah's holy spirit, Philip ran alongside the chariot and asked: 'Do you understand what

you are reading?' The man was humble and honest enough to admit that he needed help. Philip gladly instructed this spiritually hungry and teachable person. The instruction helped him to understand the Scriptures. He learned what he now had to do to enjoy a favored relationship with Jehovah in order to gain everlasting life. He became a happy, baptized servant of Jehovah, who pursued a life that was pleasing to God.—Acts 8:26-39.

You may have a Bible in your home, and you may have read it many times. Very likely you have experienced the same problem as the sincere, humble Ethiopian experienced. He could not understand what he read. He needed help and did not hesitate to accept the assistance that Jehovah God was pleased to provide. Like Philip, Jehovah's Witnesses are happy to assist you in understanding the things about God that are written in his Word, the Bible. They know that Jehovah provided the Bible and meant that it should be understood.—1 Corinthians 2:10; Ephesians 3:18; 2 Peter 3:16.

Why Is the Bible Essential?

We are living in the most urgent time of human history. The Bible refers to it as "the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 24:3) The many events taking place in fulfillment of Bible prophecy since the year 1914 show that very soon now God's heavenly Kingdom will 'crush and put an end to all other governments.'—Daniel 2:44.

Read for yourself what is foretold in the Bible in Matthew chapter 24, Mark chapter 13, and Luke chapter 21. You will observe that the events described are of global concern. They include world wars—distinctive

from all other wars. Since World War I, we have witnessed the foretold food shortages, earthquakes, and a time of unusual lawlessness. And now the nations seem on the verge of making a claim that will provide an unmistakable signal that world destruction is imminent. Concerning this, the apostle Paul wrote: "Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them; . . . and they will by no means escape." (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3) Who are the ones that do not escape? Paul explains: "Those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus." (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9) Part of the composite sign was to be fulfilled by those who obey the command given at Matthew 24:14 to preach the "good news of the kingdom . . . in all the inhabited earth."

Millions of Jehovah's Witnesses are carrying out this command in 231 lands and islands of the sea. They call at the homes of people and personally invite them to learn about Jehovah's Kingdom government. They kindly point out the course of action that each one must take to be among the survivors of this system of things and live on a paradise earth where there will be no mourning, sighing, pain, or death.—Revelation 21:3, 4.

Time is fast running out for this wicked world, and it is imperative for all who want to survive this world's end to learn what is involved in 'obeying the good news' and thus escape destruction. The next time Jehovah's Witnesses call at your home, why not accept the invitation to have a weekly Bible study? Better yet, why not ask them to study the Bible with you because you want to understand it?

CHANNEL TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

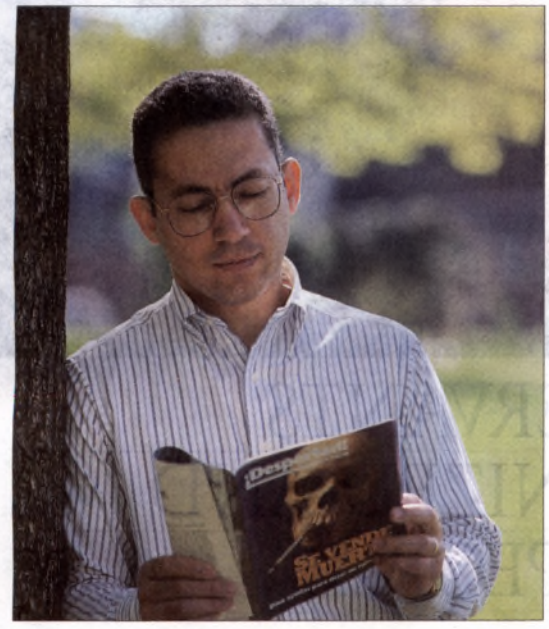
JESUS assured us that after his death and resurrection, he would raise up a "faithful and discreet slave" that would serve as his channel of communication. (Matthew 24:45-47) The apostle Paul identified this channel to the Ephesian Christians when he wrote that "there might be made known through the congregation the greatly diversified wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose that he formed in connection with the Christ, Jesus our Lord." (Ephesians 3:10, 11) It was the congregation of anointed Christians, born at Pentecost 33 C.E., that was entrusted with the "things revealed." (Deuteronomy 29:29) As a group, anointed Christians serve as the faithful and discreet slave. (Luke 12:42-44) Their appointed assignment from God is to provide spiritual understanding of the "things revealed."

Even as Bible prophecy pointed forward to the Messiah, it also directs us to the close-knit body of anointed Christian Witnesses that now serve as the faithful and discreet slave.* It helps us to understand the Word of God. All who want to understand the Bible should appreciate that the "greatly diversified wisdom of God" can become known only through Jehovah's channel of communication, the faithful and discreet slave.—John 6:68.

* See *The Watchtower*, March 1, 1981, pages 24-30.

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

The Word of God Exerts Power



"THE word of God is alive and exerts power." (Hebrews 4:12) These words have proved true many times over when people who have been deceived by false religion are exposed to Bible truths. As shown in the following experience from the Dominican Republic, the power of the Bible can change people's lives and give hope.

Jehovah's Witnesses visited a prominent Catholic woman who had recently lost two small children in death. She was grief-stricken and lamented her tragedy every day. The Witnesses showed her what the Bible says at John 5:28, 29 about the resurrection hope. After further discussions with the Witnesses, not only did she find comfort in the resurrection hope but she realized that her Catholic religious leaders were deceiving her.

She lost no time in resigning from the Catholic Church, and she accepted a regular Bible study with Jehovah's Witnesses. Her husband, however, did not agree with her views. Since he too was a very prominent Catholic, he arranged for well-known political and religious friends to visit his wife in an attempt to dissuade her from her course and bring her back into Catholicism. Later he threatened her with divorce, at one point even notifying his relatives and fellow church members that they were getting divorced.

But his strategy did not work. On the contrary, she became all the more determined to continue her Bible studies. Because of her spiritual growth and her developing fine Christian qualities, the husband decided to remain with her rather than seek a divorce. One day he even agreed to examine the Bible literature she was studying—but on one condition. He wanted to use his own Catholic version of the Bible.

To his amazement, with the help of the literature from Jehovah's Witnesses, he began to learn new things straight from his own Bible. He realized that his wife had chosen the right course, and soon he was ready to follow her example. Indeed, he saw the need to make changes in his own life. One difficult challenge was to quit his cigarette habit. After reading the July 8, 1989, issue of *Awake!* magazine with the cover title "Death for Sale—Ten Ways to Stop Smoking," he was determined to give up this unscriptural habit. In place of the customary pack of cigarettes often found in his pocket, he began to carry that issue of *Awake!* Each time he had the urge to smoke, he read the articles on smoking. The method worked! After reading the articles many times, he was able to stop smoking.

Today both husband and wife serve Jehovah as baptized ministers. When circumstances allow, he serves as a full-time minister, dedicating much of his time to the preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom, and he serves as a ministerial servant in the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. He and his wife look forward to the resurrection when they can welcome their children back to life in a new world. Yes, God's Word, the Bible, is alive and exerts power!

GOD'S SERVANTS —AN ORGANIZED AND HAPPY PEOPLE

"Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!"—PSALM 144:15.

JEHOVAH is the Universal Sovereign, the almighty God, the Creator. (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 100:3) As such, he rightly sets the standards of behavior for his servants, knowing what is best for them. (Psalm 143:8) And he is their Chief Exemplar whose qualities they need to imitate. "Become imitators of God, as beloved children," wrote an apostle.—Ephesians 5:1.

[2] A characteristic of God that we need to imitate has to do with organization. He is 'not a God of disorder.' (1 Corinthians 14:33) When we carefully observe what God has created, we are compelled to conclude that he is the most organized Personage in the universe. However, another characteristic of God that he wants his servants to imitate is his happiness, for he is "the happy God." (1 Timothy 1:11) Thus, his organizational ability is balanced with happiness. One is not made paramount at the expense of the other.

[3] All that Jehovah has made, from the

1, 2. (a) Why does Jehovah have the right to set standards for his servants? (b) What are two of Jehovah's characteristics that we should especially want to imitate?

3. How do the starry heavens demonstrate God's ability to organize?

Top: Courtesy of ROE/Anglo-Australian Observatory, photograph by David Malin

largest to the smallest, gives evidence that he is a God of organization. Consider, for example, the visible universe. It contains thousands of billions of stars. But these are not scattered about haphazardly. Astrophysicist George Greenstein observes that there is "a pattern to the organization of stars." They are organized into groups called galaxies, some containing hundreds of billions of stars. And it is estimated that there are billions of galaxies! The galaxies are also organized, a number of them (from a few to several thousand) being grouped together into a cluster of galaxies. And clusters of galaxies are thought to be organized into even larger units called superclusters.—Psalm 19:1; Isaiah 40:25, 26.

[4] The superb organization of God's creations is seen everywhere, not only in the visible heavens but also on earth, with its myriads of living things. Regarding all of this, Paul Davies, a professor of physics, wrote that observers are "awestruck" by the "majesty and intricate organization of the physical world."—Psalm 104:24.

[5] Consider a few examples of the "intricate organization" that is found in living things. Neurosurgeon Joseph Evans said of the human brain and spinal cord: "The reality of great order is almost overwhelming." Of the microscopic living cell, bacteriologist H. J. Shaughnessy stated: "The complexity and beautiful order of the microbiological world is so wonderfully constructed that it appears to be part of a divinely ordained system." And molecular biologist Michael Denton said of the genetic code (DNA) inside a cell: "It is so efficient that all the information . . . necessary to specify the design of all the species of organisms which have ever existed on the planet . . . could be held in a teaspoon and there would still be room left for all the information in every book ever written." —See Psalm 139:16.

4, 5. Give examples of organization among living things on earth.

[6] Not only does Jehovah organize his material creations but he also organizes his spirit creations in heaven. Daniel 7:10 informs us that angels to the number of 'ten thousand times ten thousand kept standing right before Jehovah.' A hundred million powerful spirit creatures in attendance, each assigned to his proper work! It is staggering to think of the skill it must take to organize such enormous numbers. Appropriately, the Bible states: "Bless Jehovah, O you angels of his, mighty in power, carrying out his word, by listening to the voice of his word. Bless Jehovah, all you [angelic] armies of his, you ministers of his, doing his will."—Psalm 103:20, 21; Revelation 5:11.

[7] How magnificently organized and efficient the Creator's works are! It is no wonder that mighty spirit creatures in the heavenly realm declare in an awe-inspired and submissive way: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created."—Revelation 4:11.

[8] Jehovah also organizes his servants on earth. When he brought the Deluge of Noah's day in 2370 B.C.E., Noah and seven others survived the Flood as a family organization. In the Exodus of 1513 B.C.E., Jehovah brought several million of his people out of Egyptian bondage and gave them a

6, 7. What organization is shown among spirit creatures, and how do they express appreciation for their Maker?

8. What examples show that Jehovah organizes his servants on earth?

detailed code of laws to organize their daily affairs and worship. And later, in the Promised Land, tens of thousands of them were organized for special service at the temple. (1 Chronicles 23:4, 5) In the first century, Christian congregations were organized under divine direction: "He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers, with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work." —Ephesians 4:11, 12.

Modern-Day Servants Also Organized

[9] Similarly, Jehovah has organized his modern-day servants so that they can effectively do his work for our day—preaching the good news of his Kingdom before he brings an end to this present ungodly system of things. (Matthew 24:14) Consider what is involved in this global work and how important good organization is. Millions of men, women, and children are being trained to teach Bible truths to others. To assist with this training, huge quantities of Bibles and Bible-based publications are printed. Why, every issue of *The Watchtower* now has a printing of over 16 million in 118 languages, and *Awake!* about 13 million in 73 languages. Nearly all issues are printed simultaneously so that practically all of Jehovah's servants get the same information at the same time.

[10] In addition, more than 73,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide are organized to meet regularly for Bible instruction. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) There are also thousands of larger gatherings—circuit assemblies and district conventions—each year. There is the large-scale global construction of new or improved Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, Bethel homes, and facilities for printing Bible literature. There are schools for the advanced training of Bible teachers, such as the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead for missionaries and the Pioneer Service School, conducted in lands around the globe.

[11] How well Jehovah has organized his people on earth to 'accomplish their ministry fully,' assisted by his ministering angels! (2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 1:13, 14; Revelation 14:6) By instructing his servants in the ways of good organization now, God is accomplishing something else. His servants are being well prepared so that when they pass through the end of this system of things, they will already be organized to begin life in the new world. Then, in an organized way under Jehovah's direction, they will start building the global Paradise. They will also be well prepared to teach God's detailed requirements for life to billions of people who will be resurrected from the dead.—Isaiah 11:9; 54:13; Acts 24:15; Revelation 20:12, 13.

Organized yet Happy

[12] While Jehovah is a prodigious worker and superb organizer, he is not cold, rigid, or mechanical. Instead, he is a very warm, happy Personage who is concerned with our happiness. "He cares for you," declares 1 Peter 5:7. We can see his care and his desire for his servants to be happy in what he has made for humans. For example, when God created the perfect man and woman, he placed them in a paradise of pleasure. (Genesis 1:26-31; 2:8, 9) He gave them everything they needed to make them supremely happy. But they lost all of it through rebellion. As a result of their sin,

9, 10. How has Jehovah organized his people in our time?

11. What future benefit will come from learning good organization now?

12, 13. Why can we say that Jehovah wants his people to be happy?

we inherited imperfection and death.—Romans 3:23; 5:12.

[13] Although imperfect now, we humans can still find happiness in what God has made. There are many things that bring us enjoyment—majestic mountains; beautiful lakes, rivers, oceans and beaches; colorful, fragrant flowers and other vegetation in endless variety; an abundance of tasty foods; spectacular sunsets that we never tire of; the starry heavens that we enjoy contemplating at night; the animal creation with its vast variety and appealing young with their playful antics; inspiring music; interesting and useful work; good friends. It is apparent that the One who arranged such things is a happy individual who enjoys making others happy.

[14] Thus, mere organized efficiency is not what Jehovah wants. He also wants his servants to be happy, just as he is happy. He does not want them fanatically organizing things at the expense of their happiness. God's servants must balance organizational skills with happiness, as he does, for where his powerful holy spirit is, there is joy. Indeed, Galatians 5:22 shows that the second fruit of God's holy spirit operating on his people is "joy."

Love Generates Happiness

[15] It is of great interest to note that the Bible states: "God *is* love." (1 John 4:8, 16) It never says: "God *is* organization." Love is God's chief quality, and it must be imitated by his servants. That is why the first fruit of God's spirit listed at Galatians 5:22 is "love," with "joy" next. Love generates joy. When we imitate Jehovah's love in our dealings with others, happiness follows, for loving people are happy people.

14. What balance does Jehovah ask of us in imitating him?
15. Why is love so important to our happiness?

[16] The importance of imitating godly love is made prominent in the teachings of Jesus. He said: "Just as the Father taught me I speak these things." (John 8:28) What, especially, was Jesus taught that he, in turn, taught others? It was that the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love neighbor. (Matthew 22:36-39) Jesus exemplified such love. He said: "I love the Father," proving it by doing God's will to the death. And he showed his love for people by dying for them. The apostle Paul told the Christians in Ephesus: 'Christ loved you and delivered himself up for you.' (John 14:31; Ephesians 5:2) Thus, Jesus told his followers: "This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you."—John 15:12, 13.

[17] Paul expressed how vital this godly love is by saying: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become a sounding piece of brass or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophesying and am acquainted with all the sacred secrets and all knowledge, and if I have all the faith so as to transplant mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my belongings to feed others, and if I hand over my body, that I may boast, but do not have love, I am not profited at all. . . . There remain faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."—1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13.

[18] When we imitate Jehovah's love, we can count on his love toward us, even when we make mistakes, for he is "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." (Exodus

16. How did Jesus demonstrate the importance of love?
17. How did Paul show that expressing love to others is vital?
18. What can we expect from Jehovah that adds to our happiness?

34:6) If we sincerely repent when we make mistakes, God does not keep account of these but lovingly forgives us. (Psalm 103: 1-3) Yes, "Jehovah is very tender in affection and merciful." (James 5:11) Knowing this contributes to our happiness.

Relative Happiness Now

[19] However, is it possible to be happy today, living as we do in the last days of this crime-filled, violent, immoral world under Satan, where sickness and death confront us? Of course, we cannot now expect the degree of happiness that will exist in God's new world, such as his Word foretells: "Here I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart. But *exult,* you people, and be *joyful forever* in what I am creating."—Isaiah 65:17, 18.

[20] What God's servants can have now is relative happiness because they know his will and have accurate knowledge of the marvelous blessings soon to come in his paradisaic new world. (John 17:3; Revelation 21:4) That is why the Bible can say: "O Jehovah of armies, happy is the man that is trusting in you," "happy is everyone fearing Jehovah, who is walking in his ways," "happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth." (Psalm 84:12; 128:1; Matthew 5:5) Thus, in spite of the present difficult circumstances we have to contend with, we can have a substantial measure of happiness. Even when bad things happen to us, we do not become saddened as do those who do not know Jehovah and who do not have the hope of eternal life.—1 Thessalonians 4:13.

[21] Happiness also comes to Jehovah's servants because they expend time, energy, and resources teaching Bible truths to others, especially people who are 'sighing and crying over all the abominations' committed in Satan's world. (Ezekiel 9:4) The Bible says: "Happy is anyone acting with consideration toward the lowly one; in the day of calamity Jehovah will provide escape for him. Jehovah himself will guard him and preserve him alive. He will be pronounced happy in the earth." (Psalm 41:1, 2) As Jesus said, "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

[22] So while God's servants cannot expect supreme happiness at this present time, they can obtain happiness that is not enjoyed by those who do not serve God. Jehovah declares: "Look! My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart, but you yourselves will make outcries because of the pain of heart and you will howl because of sheer breakdown of spirit." (Isaiah 65:14) Also, those

19, 20. (a) Why is total happiness not possible now? (b) How does the Bible show that we can have relative happiness at this time?

21. How does giving of themselves contribute to the happiness of Jehovah's servants?

22. (a) As regards happiness, contrast God's servants with those who do not serve him. (b) For what special reason should we expect to be happy?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ How does creation testify to Jehovah's being organized?
- ☐ How has Jehovah organized his servants in the past and in the present?
- ☐ What balance does Jehovah want from us?
- ☐ How important is love to our happiness?
- ☐ What kind of happiness can we expect in our time?

who serve God have a very special reason for happiness now—they have his holy spirit that "God has given to those obeying him as ruler." (Acts 5:32) And remember, where God's spirit is, there happiness is.—Galatians 5:22.

[23] In the organization of God's servants today, an important part is played by the "older men," the elders, who take the lead in the congregations, contributing to the happiness of Jehovah's people. (Titus 1:5) How should these ones view their responsibilities and their relationship to their spiritual brothers and sisters? Our next article will discuss this.

23. What will we consider in our next study?

SHEPHERDING GOD'S FLOCK WITH LOVE

"Shepherd the flock of God in your care."—1 PETER 5:2.

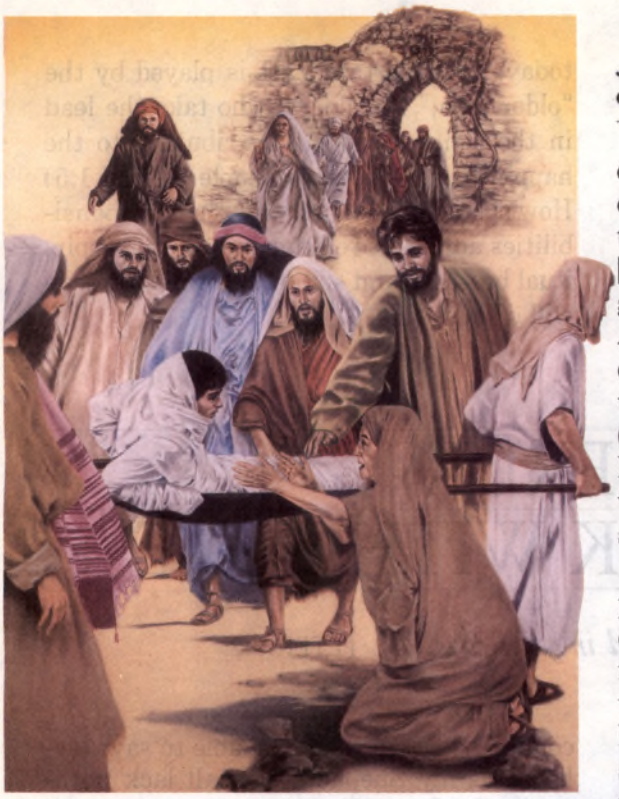
THROUGHOUT the Holy Scriptures, it is made plain that love is God's dominant quality. "God is love," states 1 John 4:8. Since his love is expressed in action, 1 Peter 5:7 says that God "cares for you." In the Bible the way that Jehovah cares for his people is likened to the way that a loving shepherd tenderly cares for his sheep: "Look! The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself . . . will shepherd his own drove. With his arm he will collect together the lambs; and in his bosom he will carry them. Those giving suck he will conduct with care." (Isaiah 40:10, 11) How comforted David was to be able to say: "Jehovah is my Shepherd. I shall lack nothing"!—Psalm 23:1.

[2] It is appropriate that the Bible likens people whom God favors to sheep, for sheep are peaceful, submissive, obedient to their caring shepherd. As a loving Shepherd, Jehovah deeply cares for his sheeplike people. He shows it by providing for them materially and spiritually and by guiding them through the difficult "last days" of this evil world toward his incoming righteous new world.—2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13; Matthew 6:31-34; 10:28-31; 2 Peter 3:13.

[3] Note Jehovah's loving care for his sheep: "The

1, 2. What is Jehovah's dominant quality, and how does it manifest itself?

3. How did the psalmist describe the way Jehovah cares for his sheep?



Jesus, the "fine shepherd," showed compassion

eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their cry for help. . . . They cried out, and Jehovah himself heard, and out of all their distresses he delivered them. Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves. Many are the calamities of the righteous one, but out of them all Jehovah delivers him." (Psalm 34: 15-19) What great comfort the Universal Shepherd provides for his sheeplike people!

The Fine Shepherd's Example

[4] God's Son, Jesus, learned well from his Father, for the Bible calls Jesus "the fine shepherd." (John 10:11-16) His vital service to God's flock is noted in Revelation chapter 7. In verse 9, God's servants of our day are called "a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues." Then verse 17 states: "The Lamb [Jesus] . . . will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes." Jesus guides God's sheep to the waters of truth that lead to everlasting life. (John 17:3) Note that Jesus is called "the Lamb," indicating his own sheeplike qualities, he being the chief example of submissiveness to God.

[5] On earth Jesus walked among the people and saw their pathetic condition. How did he respond to their plight? "He felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) Sheep without a shepherd suffer greatly at the hands of predators, as do sheep who have uncaring shepherds. But Jesus cared very much, for he said: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light."—Matthew 11:28-30.

[6] Bible prophecy foretold that Jesus would deal lovingly with people: "Jehovah has anointed me . . . to bind up the brokenhearted, . . . to comfort all the mourning ones." (Isaiah 61:1, 2; Luke 4:17-21) Never did Jesus look down upon the poor and unfortunate. Rather, he fulfilled Isaiah 42:3: "No crushed reed will he break; and as for a dim flaxen wick, he will not extinguish it."

4. What is the role of Jesus in caring for God's flock?

5. How did Jesus feel about people?

6. What consideration did Jesus show for the downtrodden?

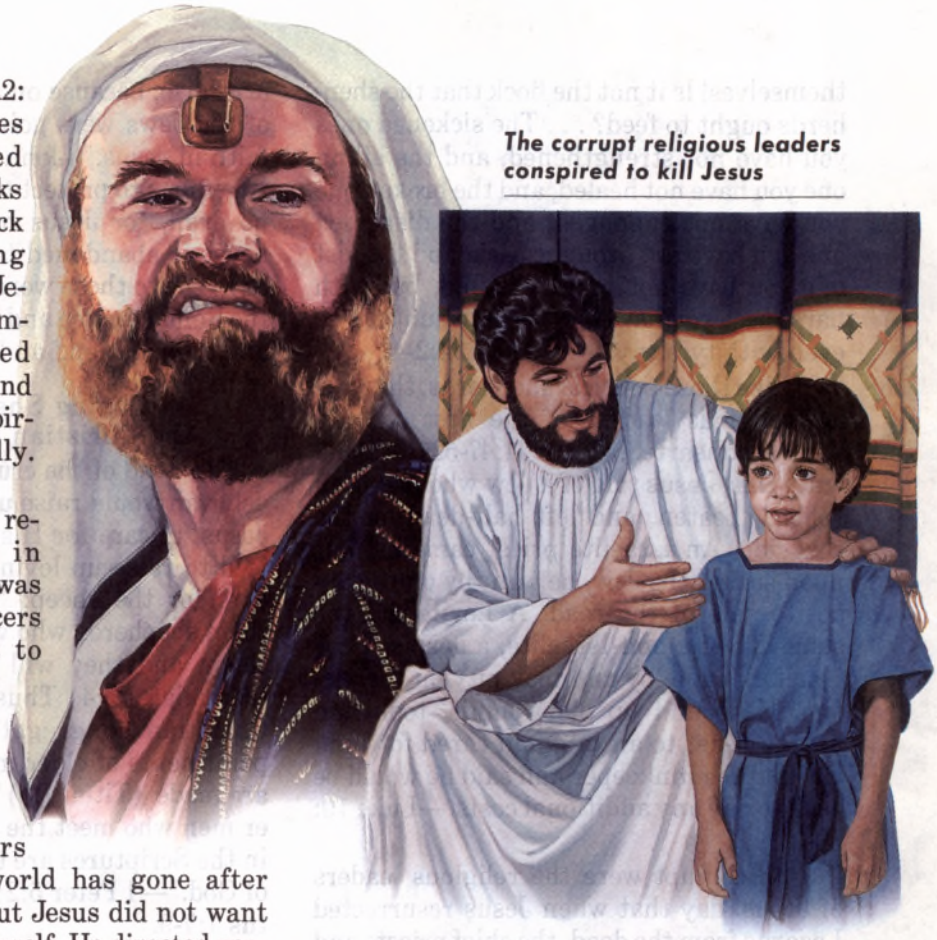
(Compare Matthew 12: 17-21.) Afflicted ones were like crushed reeds, like lamp wicks about to go out for lack of fuel. Recognizing their pitiable state, Jesus showed them compassion and infused them with strength and hope, healing them spiritually and physically. —Matthew 4:23.

[7] Sheeplike people responded to Jesus in droves. So appealing was his teaching that officers who were sent out to arrest him reported: "Never has another man spoken like this." (John 7:46) Why, the hypocritical religious leaders complained: "The world has gone after him"! (John 12:19) But Jesus did not want honor or glory for himself. He directed people to his Father. He taught them to serve Jehovah out of love for His admirable qualities: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole strength and with your whole mind."—Luke 10:27, 28.

[8] Jehovah glories in that his universal sovereignty is supported by his sheeplike people, based on their love for him. They willingly choose to serve him because of their knowledge of his lovable qualities. How different from this world's leaders whose subjects obey them only out of fear, or begrudgingly, or because they have some ulterior motive! Never could it be said of Jehovah or of Jesus what was said of a pope of the Roman Catholic Church: "He was admired by many, feared by all, loved by none."—*Vicars of Christ—The Dark Side of the Papacy,* by Peter De Rosa.

7. Where did Jesus direct people who responded to him?

8. How is the obedience that God's people give to him different from what others give to worldly rulers?



The corrupt religious leaders conspired to kill Jesus

Cruel Shepherds in Israel

[9] Unlike Jesus, the religious leaders of Israel in his day had no love for the sheep. They were like the earlier rulers in Israel of whom Jehovah had said: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have become feeders of

9, 10. Describe the leaders of ancient Israel and of the first century.

themselves! Is it not the flock that the shepherds ought to feed? . . . The sickened ones you have not strengthened, and the ailing one you have not healed, and the broken one you have not bandaged, and the dispersed one you have not brought back, and the lost one you have not sought to find, but with harshness you have had them in subjection, even with tyranny."—Ezekiel 34:2-4.

10 Like those political shepherds, the Jewish religious leaders of the first century were hardhearted. (Luke 11:47-52) To illustrate this, Jesus told of a Jew who had been robbed, beaten, and left half-dead on the roadside. An Israelite priest came by, but upon seeing the Jew, he went by on the opposite side of the road. A Levite did the same. Then a non-Israelite, a despised Samaritan, came by and took pity on the victim. He bound up his wounds, took him upon a beast to an inn, and cared for him. He paid the innkeeper and said he would be back to pay any additional costs.—Luke 10: 30-37.

11 So corrupt were the religious leaders of Jesus' day that when Jesus resurrected Lazarus from the dead, the chief priests and the Pharisees called the Sanhedrin together and said: "What are we to do, because this man [Jesus] performs many signs? If we let him alone this way, they will all put faith in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." (John 11:47, 48) They did not care about the good that Jesus had done in behalf of the dead man. They were concerned about their positions. So "from that day on they took counsel to kill [Jesus]."—John 11:53.

12 To compound their wickedness, the chief priests then "took counsel to kill Lazarus also, because on account of him many of the Jews were going there and putting faith in Jesus." (John 12:10, 11) Their selfish efforts to protect their positions were of no avail, for Jesus had told them: "Your house is abandoned to you." (Matthew 23: 38) True to those words, in that generation the Romans came and took away 'their place and their nation,' and their lives as well.

11, 12. (a) How did the wickedness of the religious leaders reach a peak in Jesus' day? (b) What did the Romans finally do to the religious leaders?

Loving Shepherds in the Christian Congregation

13 Instead of the cruel, selfish shepherds, Jehovah would raise up the Fine Shepherd, Jesus, to care for His flock. He also promised to raise up loving undershepherds to care for the sheep: "I will raise up over them shepherds who will actually shepherd them; and they will be afraid no more." (Jeremiah 23:4) Thus, as in first-century Christian congregations so today, "appointments of older men in city after city" are made. (Titus 1:5) These spiritually older men who meet the qualifications set out in the Scriptures are to "shepherd the flock of God."—1 Peter 5:2; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9.

14 In caring for the sheep, elders must "above all things" have "intense love" for them. (1 Peter 4:8) But the disciples of Jesus, being too concerned about prestige and position, had to learn this. So when the mother of two disciples said to Jesus: "Give the word that these my two sons may sit down, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom," the other disciples became indignant. Jesus said to them: "The rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority

13. Whom did Jehovah promise to send to shepherd his flock?

14, 15. (a) What attitude did the disciples find it difficult to develop? (b) What did Jesus do to show them that elders should be humble servants?

over them. This is not the way among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave."—Matthew 20:20-28.

[15] On another occasion, after the disciples "had argued among themselves who is greater," Jesus said to them: "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and minister of all." (Mark 9:34, 35) Lowliness of mind and a willingness to serve had to become part of their personality. Yet the disciples kept having difficulty with those ideas, for the very night before Jesus died, at his last evening meal, "a heated dispute" arose among them over who was the greatest! That occurred despite Jesus' having shown them how an elder must serve the flock; he had humbled himself and washed their feet. He said: "If I, although Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash the feet of one another. For I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also."—Luke 22:24; John 13:14, 15.

[16] Jehovah's Witnesses have always taught that elders must be like this. Nearly a century ago, the April 1, 1899, *Watch Tower* noted Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 and then said: "The Apostle points out distinctly that knowledge and oratory are not the most vital tests, but that love permeating the heart and extending out through all the course of life, and actuating and operating our mortal bodies, is the real test—the real proof of our divine relationship. . . . The *leading* characteristic to be looked for in every one accepted as a servant of the church, to minister in holy things, should be first of all the spirit of love." It noted that men who would not humbly serve out of love "are unsafe teachers, and are likely to do more harm than good."—1 Corinthians 8:1.

[17] Thus, older men must not 'lord it over' the sheep. (1 Peter 5:3) Instead, they are to take the lead in being "kind to one another, tenderly compassionate." (Ephesians 4:32) Paul emphasized: "Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. . . . But, besides all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union."—Colossians 3:12-14.

[18] Paul learned to do this, saying: "We became gentle in the midst of you, as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, having a tender affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not only the good news of God, but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us." (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8) In harmony with that, he said: "Speak consolingly to the depressed souls, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all." (1 Thessalonians 5:14) Regardless of the type of problem the sheep may bring to them, elders should remember Proverbs 21:13: "As for anyone stopping up his ear from the complaining cry of the lowly one, he himself also will call and not be answered."

[19] Older men who lovingly shepherd the flock are a blessing to the sheep. Isaiah 32:2 foretold: "Each one must prove to be like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an

16. In 1899, what comments did the *Watch Tower* make on the most important quality of elders?

17. How does the Bible emphasize the qualities elders must have?

18. (a) What fine example did Paul set in dealing with the sheep? (b) Why must elders not ignore the needs of the sheep?

19. Why are loving elders a blessing, and how do the sheep respond to such love?

exhausted land." We are happy to know that many of our elders today fit into that beautiful picture of refreshment. They have learned to apply the following principle: "In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Romans 12:10) When elders show this kind of love and humility, the sheep respond by giving them "more than extraordinary consideration in love because of their work."—1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13.

Respect the Use of Free Will

[20] Jehovah created humans with free will to make their own decisions. While elders are to counsel and even to discipline, they are not to take over the life or faith of another. Paul said: "Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing." (2 Corinthians 1:24) Yes, "each one will carry his own load." (Galatians 6:5) Jehovah has given us much freedom within the bounds of his laws and principles. Thus elders should avoid setting rules where Scriptural principles are not violated. And they should resist any tendency to offer their own personal opinions as dogma or to let their ego get in the way if someone disagrees with such views.—2 Corinthians 3:17; 1 Peter 2:16.

[21] Note how Paul, while imprisoned in Rome, dealt with Philemon, a Christian slave owner at Colossae in Asia Minor. Philemon's slave named Onesimus fled to Rome, became a Christian, and was helping Paul. Paul wrote to Philemon: "I would like to hold him back for myself that in place of you he might keep on ministering to me in the prison bonds I bear for the sake of the good news. But without your consent I do not want to do anything, so that your good act may be, not as under compulsion, but of your own free will." (Philemon 13, 14) Paul returned Onesimus, asking Philemon to treat him as a Christian brother. Paul knew that the flock was not his; it was God's. He was not its master but its servant. Paul did not dictate to Philemon; he respected his free will.

[22] As God's organization grows, more elders are appointed. They, as well as the more experienced elders, must understand that their position is one of humble service. In this way, as God moves his organization toward the new world, it will continue to grow as he wants—well organized but not sacrificing love and compassion for efficiency. Thus, his organization will become increasingly attractive to sheeplike ones who will see in it evidence that "God makes all his works cooperate together for the good of those who love God." That is to be expected from an organization founded on love, because "love never fails."—Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 13:8.

20. Why must elders respect free will?
21. What can be learned from Paul's attitude toward Philemon?
22. (a) What should elders understand their position to be? (b) What kind of organization is Jehovah developing?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ How does the Bible describe Jehovah's care for his people?
- ☐ What role does Jesus play in caring for God's flock?
- ☐ What chief characteristic must elders have?
- ☐ Why must elders consider the free will of the sheep?

A BARREN LAND BECOMES FERTILE

AS TOLD BY ARTHUR MELIN

It was a clear spring day in 1930, and I was standing on a dock in Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Looking down at the boat resting on the seabed, I wondered, 'Where has all the water gone?' This was my first experience with the tides of the Pacific West Coast where the sea level may drop as much as 24 feet in just six hours. But how did a prairie farm boy come to be on the shores of the Pacific Ocean?

I HAD been invited to enlarge my privilege of full-time service to Jehovah by joining the crew of the boat *Charmian*. Our assignment was to pioneer the preaching work along the isolated west coast from Vancouver to Alaska. This stretch consisted of most of British Columbia's many miles of coastline, which was barren of active praisers of Jehovah. The only exception was a small group of Kingdom publishers in the town of Prince Rupert.

I was anxious to get started, so on stepping off the train, I immediately headed for the docks to see the boat *Charmian* and meet its crew, Arne and Christina Barstad. No one was aboard, so I left. On my return later in the day, I was shocked. It looked as if the ocean were running dry!

Serving in the circuit work 1964-67

But what led up to this interesting assignment?

A Spiritual Heritage

My appreciation for spiritual things began at home on the plains of Alberta, Canada. My father had found a tract written by Charles Taze Russell of Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society that changed his life profoundly. Father started preaching to his neighbors, despite his time-consuming work of homesteading in Calmar, Alberta. That was a hundred years ago, during the early 1890's.

It was into this God-fearing home that I was born on February 20, 1905, the eighth of what eventually became ten brothers and sisters.

Father, as well as others in this Swedish community, became associated with the International Bible Students. In time, they built a meeting place, later called Kingdom Hall. It was one of the first in Canada.

Farm work never kept us from attending Christian meetings, some of which featured talks by visiting speakers sent out by the Watch Tower Society. These talks built in us an earnest desire to share in the preaching work. As a result, nearly all in our family have steadfastly walked in the light of Bible truth.

Sharing in the Preaching Work

Early in the 1920's, I was given my first witnessing assignment. I was to distribute public-talk invitations from door to door in the city of Edmonton. As I stood there alone that day, I learned a valuable lesson: *Trust in Jehovah.* (Proverbs 3:5, 6) How happy I was to accomplish that first assignment with Jehovah's help!

My confidence in Jehovah's visible organization and in his faithful and discreet slave class continued to grow as more understanding was shed on his Word of truth. Many of Christendom's appendages, such as celebrations of Christmas and birthdays, were discarded. Personal salvation no longer became a preoccupation; instead, Kingdom preaching began to take on a proper place of importance. All of this had a profound effect on my life. So not long after dedicating my life to Jehovah on April 23, 1923, I made the full-time ministry my goal.

During the subzero prairie winters, we witnessed in the rural areas with a horse and sleigh. I once spent two weeks with a group in what was known as the house-car work. These special cars proved practical in witnessing in the wide-open spaces of the Canadian prairies. Despite financial problems, severe weather conditions, and great distances to travel, I managed to persevere in the pioneer ministry in Alberta off and on for about three years until that memorable day in 1930 when I was invited to serve on the Pacific West Coast. Since I knew nothing about the sea or boats, that invitation puzzled me.

Well, it wasn't long after my arrival in Prince Rupert that I felt right at home with my new fellow workers on the boat. Brother Barstad was a seasoned sailor, having engaged in commercial fishing for many years. The next six years was a period of intense preaching, plying the coastal waters of British Columbia from Vancouver to Alaska. Another lesson learned: *Always accept an assignment from Jehovah, and never hold back.*

Sowing Seed by the Sea

Our first port of call that spring of 1930 was Ketchikan, Alaska, where we loaded on 60 cartons of Bible literature. For a number of weeks, we called on all the homes in Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Juneau, Skagway, Haines, Sitka, and other scattered settlements. Next we covered the entire British Columbia coast, completing it before the end of summer. Remote logging camps, fish-processing camps, Indian villages, small towns, as well as isolated settlers and trappers, were visited. At times it was hard to get away from lonely lighthouse keepers who welcomed someone to talk to.

In time, the Society equipped us with portable phonographs and recorded Bible lectures. We carried these with us, along with books, Bibles, and magazines. Often we had to carry them as we scrambled over coastal rocks. During low tide, we sometimes had to lug them up rickety ladders onto towering docks. I was happy for the physical

training that I had received in my youth working on a prairie homestead.

The public-address system on our boat served as a powerful tool in spreading the Kingdom news. Reflected off the water, the recorded lectures were often heard for miles. Once while anchored in an isolated cove on Vancouver Island, we played one of these Bible lectures. The next day people living inland excitedly told us: "Yesterday we heard a sermon right out of heaven!"

On another occasion an elderly couple said that they heard music coming down their chimney, but when they went outside, they heard nothing. Returning inside, they heard a voice. Why was that? Well, while they were outside, we had been changing the record. We would play music first to catch people's attention, then play a Bible lecture.

On yet another occasion, when we were anchored near an island with an Indian village, two young native boys came rowing out to see where the voices were coming from. Some on the island thought they were the voices of their dead who had come to life!

It was not unusual to place a hundred books a day with those working at remote fish canneries. Having few distractions, they had time to think of spiritual things. Eventually many of these isolated ones became Witnesses. On succeeding trips, we looked forward to visiting them for "an interchange of encouragement."—Romans 1:12.

Continued Service With a Mate

In 1931, I married Christina Barstad's sister, Anna. Afterward we continued our pioneering together on the boat and enjoyed many rewarding experiences over the years. Whales, sea lions, seals, porpoises, deer, bears, and eagles were our companions against a background of majestic mountains, secluded inlets, and intimate bays, forested with cedars, pines, and giant Douglas firs. Several times we assisted exhausted deer and their fawns as they tried to swim across fast-moving channels to escape from predators.

One afternoon we spotted a bald eagle flying low across the water, its talons firmly grasping a large chinook salmon. The fish was too big to lift completely out of the water, so the eagle was heading for the shore with the salmon in tow. Frank Franske, a member of the crew, saw the potential and ran along the shoreline to meet the tiring eagle and persuaded it to give up its catch. Our pioneer crew had a delicious salmon supper that evening, and the eagle learned to share, albeit reluctantly.

On one islet at the north end of Vancouver Island, a couple named Thuot embraced Bible truth. He was an illiterate, strong-willed, independent person in his mid-90's, and she was in her mid-80's. However, he was so intrigued with the truth that he humbled himself and allowed his wife to teach him to read. Soon he was able to study the Bible and the Society's publications for himself. Less than three years later, I had the joy of baptizing both of them at their remote island home, using our rowboat as a baptismal tank!

We also had the joy of seeing the Sallis family in Powell River respond to the Kingdom message. Walter read the booklet *War or Peace—Which?* and recognized the ring of truth immediately. Shortly the whole family joined Walter in the pioneer ranks in Vancouver, where we would tie up *Charmian* for the winter. He proved to be very zealous, and over the years endeared himself to the whole association of brothers

The type of boat used in witnessing along the coast

in the Vancouver area. He completed his earthly course in 1976, leaving behind a large family of Witnesses.

Overcoming Opposition

The clergy in the Indian villages often resented our work, considering us poachers on their spiritual domain. At Port Simpson the local clergyman demanded that the village chief prohibit us from calling at the homes. We contacted the chief and asked if he thought the clergyman rightly classified his people as too ignorant to think for themselves. We suggested that his people be given the opportunity to hear a discussion of God's Word and decide for themselves what they wanted to believe. The result: He gave us the go-ahead to continue preaching in the village.

Another village chief for decades thwarted all attempts by council members and religious groups to hinder the Witnesses from making contact with his people. "As long as I am chief," he said, "Jehovah's Witnesses are welcome here." True, we were not always welcome everywhere, but despite the opposition we were never forced to leave an area. Thus we were able to accomplish our ministry each time we docked.

Enduring Troubles at Sea

Over the years, we faced difficulties with storms, tides, uncharted rocks, and sometimes engine trouble. Once we drifted too close to Lasqueti Island, about a hundred miles north of Vancouver. We got hung up on a reef, caught there on a falling tide, and were at the mercy of the elements. If the weather had turned bad, the boat would have been smashed to pieces on the rocks. All of us scrambled onto the rocks and made the best of a bad situation. We had lunch, caught up on some studying, and waited for the tide to rise again.

In spite of the many risks and inconveniences, it was a healthy, happy life. The birth of our two sons, however, brought a big change. We continued to live on the boat, but whenever we sailed as far north as Oona River, Anna and the boys stayed there with her parents while the rest of us continued farther north to Alaska. Then, when we returned south, Anna and the children rejoined us.

I do not remember the children ever complaining or being sick. They wore life belts at all times, and sometimes we even tied a rope around them. Yes, there were some tense moments.

Further Adjustments

In 1936 we had to leave the *Charmian,* and I obtained secular employment. Later we had a third son. In time, I purchased

a fishing boat, which not only served as a means of livelihood but also allowed us to continue in the preaching work along the coast.

We established a home on Digby Island, across the bay from Prince Rupert, and before long a small congregation was formed. During World War II, when the preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Canada, we would take a boat over to Prince Rupert after midnight and "blitz" the territory, leaving literature at every home. No one ever related our midnight crossings to the distribution of banned literature!

The Land Has Become Fertile

Gradually more people began to associate with Jehovah's Witnesses, and in 1948 the need for a Kingdom Hall in Prince Rupert was apparent. After buying an army building located across the harbor, we dismantled it, rafted it across, and then trucked it to the building site. Jehovah blessed our hard work, and we had our own Kingdom Hall.

In 1956, I reentered the pioneer ranks, and Anna joined me in 1964. We again worked by boat along the Pacific Coast. For a time we also shared in the circuit work, visiting congregations from the Queen Charlotte Islands eastward across the mountains to Fraser Lake, and later as far as Prince George and Mackenzie. Over the years, we traveled throughout the Pacific Northwest thousands of miles by car, boat, and plane.

In Prince Rupert we have continued to enjoy fine experiences in the ministry. Both Anna and I have studied with individuals who later attended the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead and afterward served as missionaries in foreign lands. What a joy it is to see our spiritual children carry the precious Kingdom message to distant lands!

Now both of us are well past 80 and are coping with deteriorating health, but we are still happy in Jehovah's service. The natural beauties we have seen in Alaska and British Columbia evoke treasured memories. Yet it brings even greater joy to see the once barren spiritual wilderness of this vast area now blossoming with many congregations of Jehovah's praisers.

Especially has it done our hearts good to see our own children, as well as our spiritual children, grow up and bless Jehovah. We rejoice that we have had a small part in the spiritual growth in this part of the earth. Alaska, for example, now has its own branch office that coordinates the work of over 25 congregations.

Here in Prince Rupert we had the privilege in 1988 of dedicating a beautiful new Kingdom Hall, right in the very heart of the city. Yes, we rejoice, as did Isaiah, in saying: "You have added to the nation; O Jehovah, . . . you have glorified yourself. You have extended afar all the borders of the land."—Isaiah 26:15.

Are You Helping Your Child to Choose Jehovah?

"I FELT that studying the Bible was really boring and tiresome. Secretly, I decided in my heart that I would not be one of Jehovah's Witnesses when I grew up," declared one young man. Although hopefully the majority of children in Christian homes will eventually choose to stand on Jehovah's side, young ones like him may go through a difficult time choosing Jehovah as their God.

Parents sometimes feel at a loss as to how to guide their children effectively. They undergo much soul-searching, like the anxious father who once said: "To be honest, there were times when I looked at my children's sleeping faces, tears of disappointment still on their cheeks, and wondered if I should not have been more lenient." His two sons grew up and chose to serve Jehovah.

Yet there are youths who abandon Jehovah and leave the Christian fold for Satan's world. So just how do parents succeed in helping their children to choose Jehovah? To answer that question, let us first find out why some youths abandon Jehovah when their parents so desperately want them to stay with him.

Why Some Youths Abandon Jehovah

One of the more common factors is that some youths never really get to know Jehovah or his ways. Though attending Christian meetings from infancy, they merely go through the motions, and there is no real searching for Jehovah. (Isaiah 55:6; Acts 17:27) The boy mentioned above was bored at the Christian meetings because he did not understand what was being said by the speakers on the platform.

The seeds of truth are planted in some, but they allow their hearts to be allured by the apparently carefree, materialistic lifestyle of Satan's world. Some cannot cope with the extremely strong desire to be with and be like their peers.—1 Chronicles 28:9; Luke 8:12-14; 1 Corinthians 15:33.

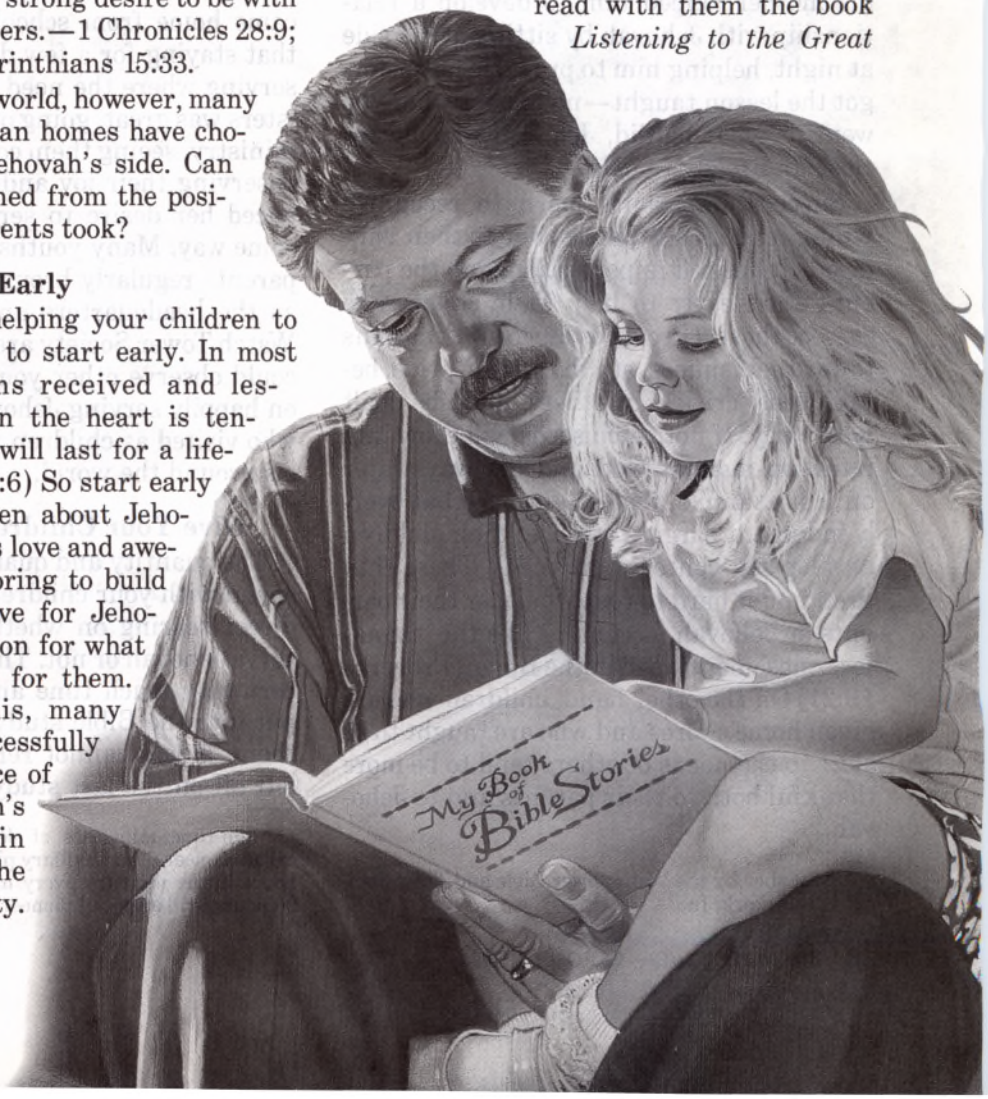
Throughout the world, however, many children in Christian homes have chosen to stand on Jehovah's side. Can something be learned from the positive steps their parents took?

Start Early

A vital key in helping your children to choose Jehovah is to start early. In most cases, impressions received and lessons learned when the heart is tender and receptive will last for a lifetime. (Proverbs 22:6) So start early to tell your children about Jehovah's goodness, his love and awesomeness, endeavoring to build in their hearts love for Jehovah and appreciation for what Jehovah has done for them. To accomplish this, many parents have successfully used the abundance of articles on Jehovah's creations found in publications of the Watchtower Society.

Obedience and respect for Jehovah and his worship are among other qualities that must be inculcated early in life. It is heartwarming to see preschool children at Christian meetings struggle to take simple notes and to look up texts in their own Bibles or go with their parents to the bathroom to wash their faces with cold water when they get drowsy. These are simple things, but how vital they are in impressing on the young mind that respect and obedience should be shown to Jehovah!

Serious personal Bible instruction should also start early. When their boys were two years old, one couple started to read with them the book *Listening to the Great*



*Teacher.** Later, when the boys began school, they would get up early and study each morning with their mother in the books *My Book of Bible Stories* and *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth.** This would be followed by a discussion of the day's text conducted by the father before breakfast. The parents' efforts were richly rewarded when their sons recently chose to serve Jehovah, symbolizing their dedication by water baptism at the ages of 10 and 11.

A fine young man who is serving at the Watch Tower Society's branch office in Japan recalled that when he was very young, his mother helped him to develop a relationship with Jehovah by sitting at his side at night, helping him to pray. He never forgot the lesson taught—no matter where he went or what he did, Jehovah was always close and ready to help.

Successful parents learn to recognize wrong tendencies that are due to their children's inherited imperfection, and the parents start early to help their children to correct these. (Proverbs 22:15) Inclinations toward selfishness, stubbornness, pride, being overly critical of others, must be dealt with early. If not, such seeds will grow into rebellion against God and his ways later on. For example, well-intentioned but overly indulgent parents often let their children develop self-centered attitudes. These children find it hard to respect either their parents or Jehovah, becoming like the 'thankless ones' mentioned in the Bible. (Proverbs 29:21) On the other hand, children who are given home chores and who are taught to be alert to the needs of others tend to be more thankful both to their parents and to Jehovah.

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Another essential is starting early to set theocratic goals that a child can reasonably achieve. If this is not done early and consistently, others may fill his mind and heart with different goals. Reading the Bible through, personally studying one of the Watchtower Society's publications, joining the Theocratic Ministry School, becoming a proclaimer of the good news, and getting baptized should be included among these goals.

Takafumi recalls that his mother got him into the habit of reading the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines by making up simple questions and leaving them on the kitchen table for him to find when he came home from school. Yuri remembers that staying for a few days with pioneers* serving where the need for Christian ministers was great, going out with them in the ministry, seeing them cook good meals, and observing their joy and zeal greatly influenced her desire to serve Jehovah in the same way. Many youths recount that their parents regularly brought them to Bethel, as the headquarters and branches of the Watch Tower Society are called, where they could observe other young men and women happily serving Jehovah. Many of those who visited as children now serve in Bethels around the world.

Give Your Children Your Time

The quantity and quality of the time you spend with your children will likely have a direct bearing on whether they choose to serve Jehovah or not. They are quick to discern how much time and preparation you put into the Bible study you conduct with them. If you cannot remember where you left off on the last study or you cancel the

* Full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called pioneers. An auxiliary pioneer spends at least 60 hours in the ministry every month, a regular pioneer 90 hours, and a special pioneer 140 hours.

study for trivial reasons, you are conveying the message that the study is not that important. However, when they see that parents make sacrifices for the study, prepare well for it and conduct the study regularly no matter what comes, an entirely different message is conveyed. Though it is not a requirement, some mothers dress up for their children's study, the same as when going to meetings or conducting a Bible study with a neighbor. The impression given is that Jehovah's worship is important.

Much time and effort will be needed to make your children's Bible education enjoyable, reaching their heart. Small children in particular are impressed when they see the things they are learning acted out in front of them. One father, for example, helped his children to visualize the resurrection by acting out the Bible account of the resurrection of Lazarus. He went into the closet and then emerged as the resurrected Lazarus.—John 11:17-44.

As the children approach adulthood, it takes even more time and skill to deal with the flood of emotions, doubts, and anxieties they face. The time set aside by loving and discerning parents at this stage is crucial if the children are to develop trust in Jehovah. One successful father of four recounted that when his children faced various problems, he would look up and discuss with them related material in Watchtower publications every day until the crises were completely overcome.

A busy pioneer mother of two noticed that her daughter was becoming withdrawn and lacked joy in theocratic activities. So the mother determined to be at home when the child returned from school each afternoon, engaging the daughter in conversation over a cup of tea. Through the intimate mother-daughter conversations, the girl received the help she needed. Now, upon graduating from high school, she has joined her mother in the pioneer service. —Proverbs 20:5.

Good Association and Example

In addition to giving their time, parents must provide wholesome association for their offspring. Proverbs 13:20 says: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly."

Many successful parents recognize the truth of that proverb. A father of four says: "When I look back, I think it was our children's wide circle of friends in the truth that helped move them to serve Jehovah. I encouraged them to make friends in other congregations as well as our own and to nurture those friendships." A Christian elder who has served at Bethel for many years reminisced: "When I was young, we lived in a small house, but it was always offered as accommodations for the circuit overseer. In addition, special pioneers in our congregation regularly had dinner with us. They took baths at our house and associated with us. Hearing their experiences and seeing their joy helped me to cultivate appreciation for the full-time service."

Good association helps those who are going through difficulties. A mother whose

In Our Next Issue

What Is the Condition of the Dead?

Do You Teach as Jesus Did?

Peter's Tomb—In the Vatican?

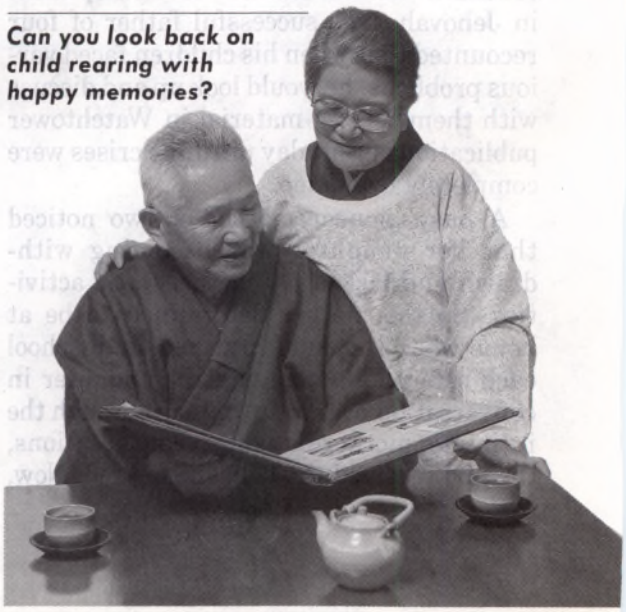
son was experiencing a turbulent time discussed the problem with a traveling overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses. He recommended taking the boy out in the field service with her. "If you do, his spirituality and everything else will improve," the overseer said. She reports: "In our congregation there was an arrangement for evening witnessing, and many school-age children, several older regular pioneers, and at least one elder shared in it. At first it was a struggle to get my son to go out regularly, but that did not last long as he always came home more cheerful and encouraged by the wholesome association. While he was a student in high school, he got baptized and served as an auxiliary pioneer every month, and when he graduated, he became a regular pioneer." Wholesome association coupled with doing Jehovah's will brought good results.

There may not locally be young ones that can be a wholesome influence on your child, but an observation repeatedly made by many youths who chose to serve Jehovah concerns their parents' examples. Many youths admired their parents and wanted to imitate them. Yuri recalls her mother's hospitality and how she cared for others, calling them on the telephone and making meals for the sick. Tatsuo, who comes from a family of four boys, all now grown and serving Jehovah, said: "Mom could not study with us regularly because Dad was an unbeliever and she got much opposition from the relatives. But observing her stand for the truth and her joy in serving Jehovah influenced me greatly. She also was willing to stay up till the early hours of the morning to help us with our problems." Parental words of wisdom have power when backed up by faithful works. Yoichiro said about his parents: "I cannot remember that they ever expressed negative thoughts about others in the congregation; nor did they allow us children to gossip about the faults of others."—Luke 6: 40-42.

Joy in Seeing Children Choose Jehovah

There is no foolproof formula to help your children to choose Jehovah. There will be many anxious moments. But the troubled father mentioned earlier said: "As parents we always faithfully tried to follow the suggestions of Jehovah's visible organization. This was a great help in overcoming problems." Their efforts met with success.

Yes, by doing your best to follow Bible guidelines, giving your children sound reasons for loving Jehovah, backed up by your faithful example and sincere efforts to help, you too may eventually find your efforts crowned with success. Recall the boy mentioned earlier, who had once determined not to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses? Well after his mother had successfully helped him through his difficult years, he said: "I'm glad she never gave up!" You may have a similar outcome with your children. —Galatians 6:9.



Can you look back on child rearing with happy memories?

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

Would it be proper to accept a vaccination or some other medical injection containing albumin derived from human blood?

Frankly, each Christian must personally decide on this.

God's servants rightly want to obey the directive found at Acts 15:28, 29, to abstain from blood. Accordingly, Christians will not eat unbled meat or products such as blood sausage. But God's law also applies in the medical area. Jehovah's Witnesses carry a document stating that they refuse 'blood transfusions, whole blood, red cells, white cells, platelets, or blood plasma.' What, though, about serum injections containing a tiny amount of a blood protein?

Witnesses have long realized that this is a matter for private decision in accord with each one's Bible-trained conscience. This was pointed out in "Questions From Readers" of *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1990, which discussed serum injections that a physician may recommend if one is exposed to certain diseases. The active components of such injections are not blood plasma per se but antibodies from the blood plasma of those who have developed resistance. Some Christians who feel that they can in good conscience accept such injections have noted that antibodies from the blood of a pregnant woman cross into the blood of the baby in her womb. "Questions From Readers" mentioned this, as well as the fact that some albumin passes from a pregnant woman to her baby.

Many find this noteworthy, since some vaccines that are not prepared from blood may contain a relatively small amount of plasma albumin that was used or added to stabilize the ingredients in the preparation. Currently a small amount of albumin is also used in injections of the synthetic hormone EPO (erythropoietin). Some Witnesses have accepted injections of EPO because it can hasten red blood cell production and so may relieve a physician of a feeling that a blood transfusion might be needed.

Other medical preparations may come into use in the future that involve a comparatively small amount of albumin, since pharmaceutical companies develop new products or change the formulas of existing ones. Christians may thus want to consider whether albumin is part of a vaccination or other injection that a doctor recommends. If they have doubts or have reason to believe that albumin is a component, they can inquire of their physician.

As noted, many Witnesses have not objected to accepting an injection that contains a small quantity of albumin. Still, anyone wanting to study the matter more thoroughly before making a personal decision should review the information presented in "Questions From Readers" of *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1990.

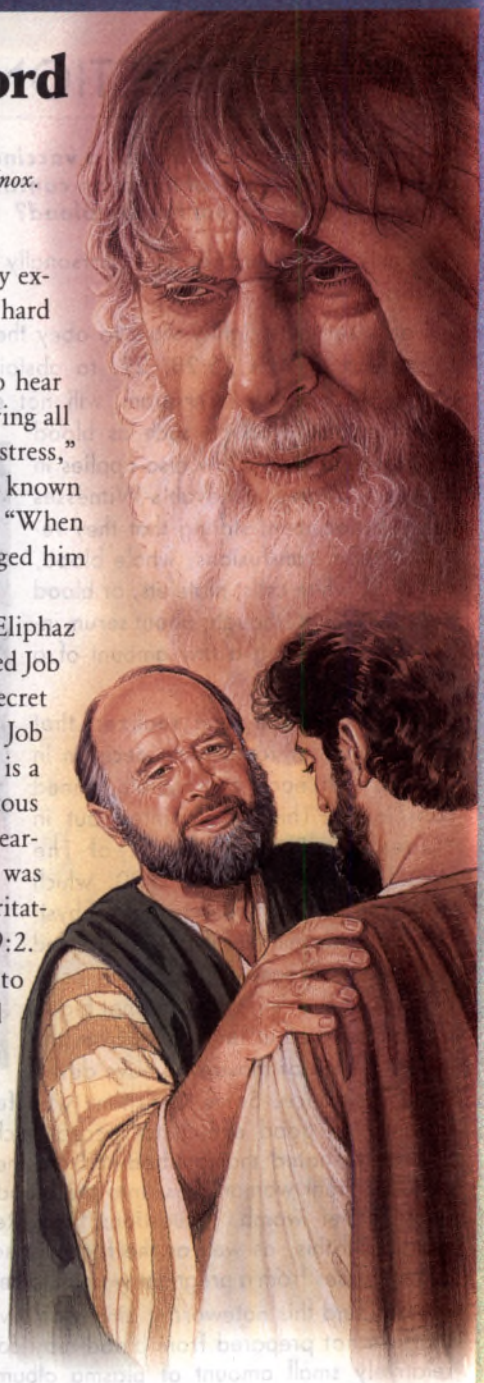
The Power of a Kind Word

"A heart bowed down with anxiety, how a kind word can refresh it!"—Proverbs 12:25, *Knox*.

CHRISTIANS are not immune to adversity. At times they experience anxiety because of living in these "critical times hard to deal with."—2 Timothy 3:1.

When suffering such calamity, what a blessing it is to hear kind words from a loyal friend! "A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress," says the Bible. (Proverbs 17:17) The faithful man Job was known for being this type of friend. Even Eliphaz said of him: "When someone stumbled, weak and tired, your words encouraged him to stand."—Job 4:4, *Today's English Version*.

However, when Job himself needed encouragement, Eliphaz and his companions did not utter kind words. They blamed Job for his adversity, implying that he must have had some secret fault. (Job 4:8) *The Interpreter's Bible* comments: "What Job needs is the compassion of a human heart. What he gets is a series of absolutely 'true' and absolutely beautiful religious clichés and moral platitudes." So distraught was Job at hearing the speech of Eliphaz and his companions that he was compelled to cry out: "How long will you men keep irritating my soul and keep crushing me with words?"—Job 19:2.

Never should we cause a fellow servant of God to cry out in distress because of our thoughtless, unkind words. (Compare Deuteronomy 24:15.) A Bible proverb warns: "What you say can preserve life or destroy it; so you must accept the consequences of your words." —Proverbs 18:21, *TEV*.

Recognizing the power of speech, let us follow the example of the apostle Paul. While in Macedonia, he was "encouraging the ones there with many a word." —Acts 20:2.