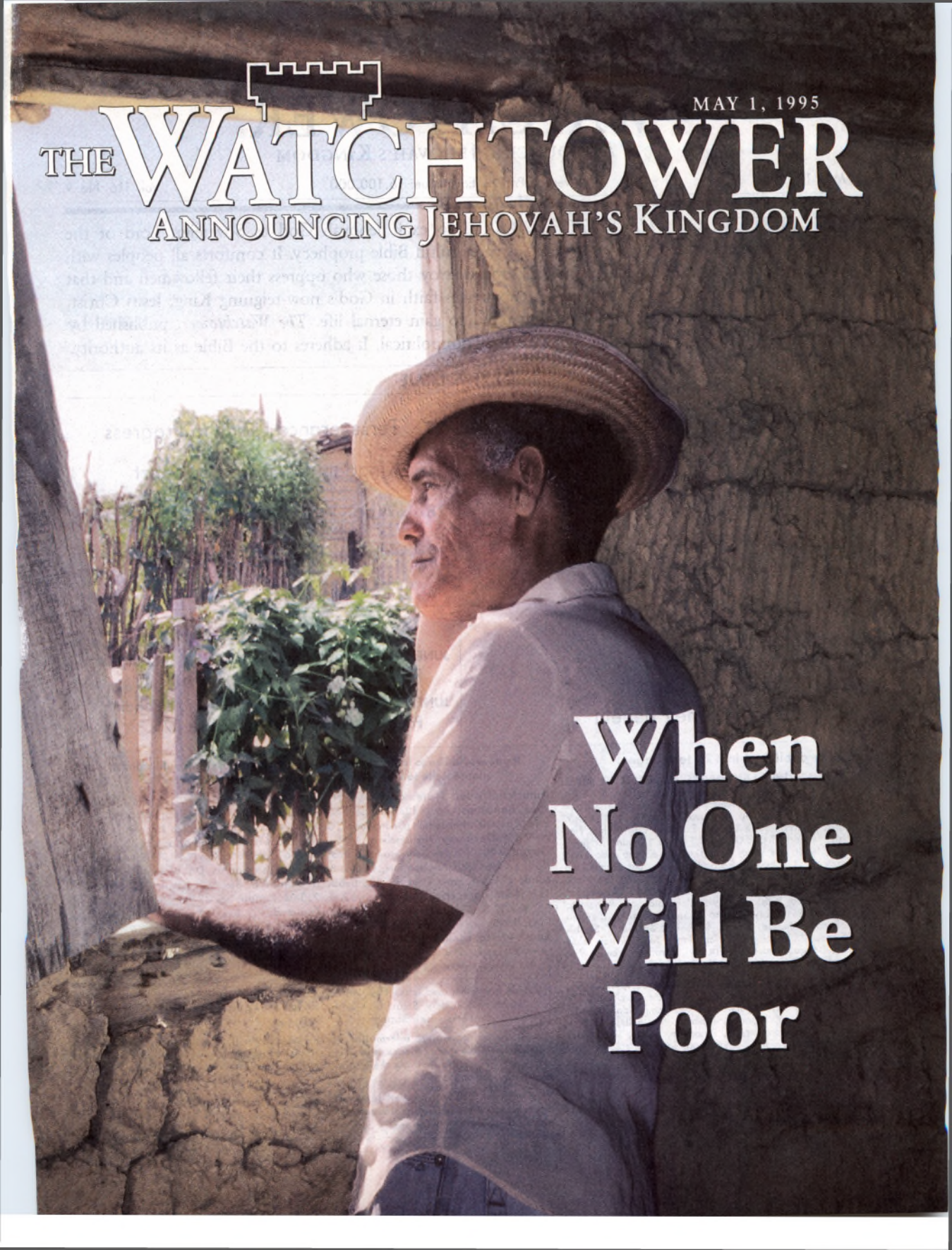


A man wearing a straw hat and a light-colored shirt is looking out from a stone wall. The background shows a rustic setting with a wooden fence and some greenery.

THE WATCHTOWER

MAY 1, 1995

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

**When
No One
Will Be
Poor**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

May 1, 1995

Average Printing Each Issue: 16,100,000

Vol. 116, No. 9

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 translation used is the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References, unless otherwise indicated.

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Publication of "The Watchtower" is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

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The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semi-monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Printed in U.S.A.



How Long Will the Poor Have to Wait?

"If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich." —John F. Kennedy.

"WOULD like the future to be bright for everyone—no poverty, nobody sleeping in the park, a paradise!" Thus spoke a 12-year-old boy from São Paulo, Brazil. But is it possible to eliminate poverty? How long will the poor have to wait?

Some consider themselves poor because they cannot buy things they want. Yet, think about the sad plight of those who are really poverty-stricken. Can you imagine the extreme hardship and unhappiness of such people? Some have to compete with gulls and rats, as they comb through refuse dumps looking for food! How long will such poverty afflict mankind? The appeal of Federico Mayor, director-general of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), is ap-

propriate: "Let us abandon that dubious tolerance which allows us to tolerate the intolerable—the poverty, hunger and suffering of millions of human beings."

Will the dream of universal well-being be fulfilled? What hope do the poor have?

What Opportunities for the Poor?

Well-meaning leaders propose more jobs, better wages, improved social programs, and land reform. They may agree with former U.S. president John F. Kennedy: "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich." Good intentions, though, are not enough to eradicate poverty. For example, will economic growth help the poor in general? Not necessarily. Former Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru stated: "The forces of a

capitalist society, if left unchecked, tend to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.” However, besides hardship and privation, a sense of worthlessness increases the burden of the poor. Can human leaders help the poor to overcome feelings of helplessness and hopelessness?

Actually, many of the desperately poor

have learned to cope with poverty and overcome feelings of low self-respect in the face of great difficulties, such as sky-high inflation and unemployment. Moreover, famine, homelessness, and misery will without fail be rooted out. Does this surprise you? We invite you to read the next article: “Soon, No One Will Be Poor!”

Soon, No One Will Be Poor!

“HAVE no fear, for, look! I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have.” (Luke 2:10) These uplifting words were heard by astonished shepherds near Bethlehem on the night that Jesus was born. In harmony with that declaration, Jesus laid great stress on “good news” during his earthly ministry. Today, when we depend so much on money to care for our needs, how can the good news about Jesus benefit us?

Jesus Christ declared the “good news to the poor.” (Luke 4:18) According to 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.” His message was especially encouraging to the poverty-stricken. “On seeing the crowds he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36) True, Jesus said, “You have the poor always with you,” but we should not conclude from these words that there is no hope for the needy. (John 12:8) As long as this wicked system lasts, there will be poor people, no matter what may cause their plight. God’s Word does not ignore the reality of

poverty, but it does not dwell on the negative aspects. Rather, it offers the poor help to cope with the anxieties of life.

Help for the Poor

Notably, it has been said: “No greater burden can be borne by an individual than to know no one cares or understands.” Yet, despite lack of compassion on the part of the majority, there is still good news for the poor—both for the present and for the future.

Unhappily, many have little interest in helping the poor. According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, some believe that “people in society compete for survival and . . . superior individuals become powerful and wealthy.” Those who believe this theory, called social Darwinism, may view the poor as just lazy people or spendthrifts. Yet, rural laborers, migrant workers, and others, despite being poorly paid, often work very hard to feed their families.

In many lands poverty is quite common. Hence, the poor—the majority—are not made to feel that they are a failure. Nevertheless, in such lands there are people living in great luxury in the midst of the poverty. Comfortable, sumptuous homes ex-

ist alongside crowded, unhealthy shanties. Well-paid men drive their expensive cars along streets crowded with the indigent and unemployed. In such lands the poor are painfully aware of their plight. Really, "the poor suffer not only from poor nutrition, bad housing, and inadequate medical care, but also from constant anxiety about their condition," says *The World Book Encyclopedia*. "Unable to get and hold good jobs, they lose all sense of dignity and self-respect." How, then, do some of the very poor cope with their situation? What has the good news about Jesus got to do with coping?

First, remember that poverty may be made worse by unwise habits. Consider some examples. Valdecir admits that while his wife and small children had little to eat, he wasted money maintaining an immoral life-style. He says: "Although employed, I never had any money but always had various lottery tickets in my pocket." Milton, because of heavy drinking and smoking, lost a business with 23 employees. He says: "I spent nights on the street, unable to go home, and my family suffered a great deal because of me."

João too wasted his salary on vices. "I spent nights away from home. All I earned was not enough for my vices and affairs. The situation became unbearable, and my wife wanted a separation." In addition to his financial and marital problems, there were yet others. He says: "I caused problems with relatives and neighbors, and I especially had problems at work. As a result, I was constantly out of work." Júlio was a drug addict. However, he explains: "Since my salary was never enough to sustain my drug habit, I began

working as a narcotics dealer so as not to have to buy drugs."

Raised in a poor family of eight children, José wanted to have something for himself. Figuring he had nothing to lose, together with other youths he began robbing people. In despair, another youth became a member of a gang named Headbangers. He explains: "Since most of us were very poor, we found a certain satisfaction in breaking things and attacking people."

Yet, today these men and their families no longer suffer deep privation or feelings of bitterness and resentment. No longer are they helpless or hopeless. Why not? Because they studied the good news that Jesus preached. They applied the Bible's counsel and associated with like-minded

Why waste resources on gambling, smoking, heavy drinking, drug abuse, or an immoral life-style?



individuals in congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. And they learned some very important things about wealth and poverty.

Help to Cope With Poverty

First, they learned that if Bible principles are applied, the bad effects of poverty can be mitigated. The Bible condemns immorality, drunkenness, gambling, and drug abuse. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Such things are very expensive. They can make a rich man poor, and a poor man even poorer. Abandoning these vices and others like them does much to improve the economic situation of a family.

Second, they found that there are more important things in life than wealth. A balanced view is expressed in these inspired words: "Wisdom is for a protection the same as money is for a protection; but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom itself preserves alive its owners." (Ecclesiastes 7:12) Yes, money is necessary. But Bible-based wisdom and knowledge of God's purposes are far more useful. Indeed, to one lacking wisdom, having too much money can be as much of a burden as having too little. The Bible writer wisely prayed: "Give me neither poverty nor riches. Let me devour the food prescribed for me, that I may not become satisfied and I actually deny you and say: 'Who is Jehovah?' and that I may not come to poverty and I actually steal and assail the name of my God."—Proverbs 30:8, 9.

Third, they discovered that if a person lives according to the good news Jesus preached, he need never feel abandoned. The good news has to do with God's Kingdom. The message is termed the "good news of the kingdom," and in our day it is being preached in all the inhabited earth. (Matthew 24:14) Jesus told us that we would be supported if we put our hope in that Kingdom. He said: "Keep on, then, seeking first

the kingdom and [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) God does not promise fancy cars or luxurious houses. Jesus was speaking of the necessities of life, things like food and clothing. (Matthew 6:31) But millions today can testify that Jesus' promise is reliable. An individual, even a very poor individual, is not left entirely if he puts the Kingdom first.

Fourth, they found that one who puts God's Kingdom first is not embittered by economic hardship. Yes, a poor man has to work hard. But if he serves God, he has a privileged relationship with his Creator, of whom the Bible says: "He has neither despised nor loathed the affliction of the afflicted one; and he has not concealed his face from him, and when he cried to him for help he heard." (Psalm 22:24) In addition, a poor person has help in coping with the problems of life. He enjoys warm companionship with fellow Christians and has a knowledge of and confidence in Jehovah's revealed will. Things like these "are more to be desired than gold, yes, than much refined gold."—Psalm 19:10.

At Last, No More Poverty!

Finally, individuals who heed the good news learn that Jehovah God has purposed to solve the problem of poverty once and for all by means of his Kingdom. The Bible promises: "Not always will the poor one be forgotten, nor will the hope of the meek ones ever perish." (Psalm 9:18) The Kingdom is a real government, established in the heavens with Jesus Christ as Ruler. Soon, that Kingdom will replace human governments in the administration of human affairs. (Daniel 2:44) Then, as enthroned King, Jesus "will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul,

***Jehovah God will solve
the problems of human poverty
by means of his Kingdom***

and their blood will be precious in his eyes.”—Psalm 72:13, 14.

Looking forward to that time, Micah 4:3, 4 says: “They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it.” Who is spoken of here? Why, all those who submit to God’s Kingdom. That Kingdom will solve all the problems that afflict mankind—even the problem of sickness and death. “He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces.” (Isaiah 25:8; 33:24) What a different world that will be! And remember, we can believe these promises because they are inspired by God himself. He says: “My people must dwell in a peaceful abiding place and in residences of full confidence and in undisturbed resting-places.” —Isaiah 32:18.

Confidence in God’s Kingdom overcomes the lack of self-respect often caused by poverty. A poor Christian knows that he is just as important in God’s eyes as is a Christian who is wealthy. God loves both equally, and both have the same hope. Both eagerly look forward to the time when, under God’s Kingdom, poverty will be a thing of the past. What a glorious time that will be! At last, no one will be poor!



ACCEPT THE BIBLE FOR WHAT IT REALLY IS

"We also thank God incessantly, because when you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in you believers."—1 THESSALONIANS 2:13.

THE Holy Bible is the most extensively translated and widely distributed book in the world. It is freely acknowledged to be one of the great works of literature. More important, however, the Bible provides the guidance that is urgently needed by people of every race and every nation, regardless of their occupation or position in life. (Revelation 14:6, 7) In a manner that satisfies both mind and heart, the Bible answers such questions as: What is the purpose of human life? (Genesis 1:28; Revelation 4:11) Why have the governments of mankind not been able to bring about lasting peace and security? (Jeremiah 10:23; Revelation 13:1, 2) Why do people die? (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-6; Romans 5:12) In the midst of this troubled world, how can we successfully cope with the problems of life? (Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 3:5, 6) What does the future hold for us?—Daniel 2:44; Revelation 21:3-5.

² Why does the Bible answer such questions authoritatively? Because it is the Word of God. He used humans to do the writing, but as clearly stated at 2 Timothy 3:16, "all Scripture is inspired of God."

1. What sort of information in the Bible makes that book truly outstanding?
2. Why does the Bible provide completely reliable answers to our questions?

It is not the product of private interpretation of human events. "Prophecy [declarations of things to come, divine commands, the Bible's moral standard] was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit."—2 Peter 1:21.

³ Appreciating the Bible's value, not a few people have risked imprisonment, even death, to possess and read it. That was true in years past in Catholic Spain, where the clergy feared that their influence would be undermined if people read the Bible in their own tongue; it was true also in Albania, where harsh measures were carried out under an atheistic regime in order to end all religious influence. Yet, God-fearing individuals treasured copies of the Scriptures, read them, and shared them with one another. During World War II, in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, a Bible was cautiously passed from one cellblock to another (though this was forbidden), and those who had access to it memorized portions to share with others. During the 1950's, in what was then Communist East Germany, Jehovah's Witnesses who were imprisoned

3. (a) Give examples that show how highly the Bible has been valued by people in various lands. (b) Why were individuals willing to risk their lives in order to read the Scriptures?

because of their faith risked prolonged solitary confinement when they handed small portions of the Bible from one prisoner to another to be read at night. Why did they do it? Because they recognized that the Bible is the Word of God, and they knew that “not by bread alone” but by “every expression of Jehovah’s mouth does man live.” (Deuteronomy 8:3) These expressions, recorded in the Bible, enabled those Witnesses to stay alive spiritually despite being subjected to unbelievable cruelty.

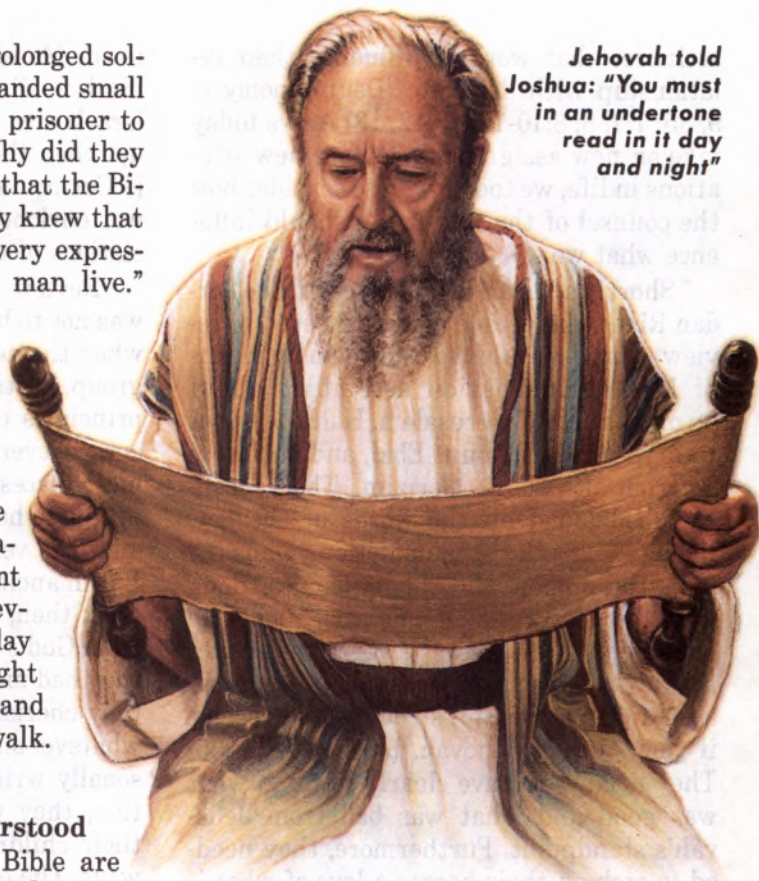
⁴ The Bible is not a book to be simply put on the shelf for occasional reference, nor is it meant for use only when fellow believers gather for worship. Every day it should be used to shed light on situations that confront us and to show us the right way to walk. —Psalm 25:4, 5.

Meant to Be Read and Understood

⁵ In our day, copies of the Bible are readily available in most lands, and we urge every reader of *The Watchtower* to obtain a copy. During the time when the Bible was being written, there were no printing presses. People in general did not have personal copies. But Jehovah arranged for his servants to hear what had been written. Thus, Exodus 24:7 reports, after Moses had written down what Jehovah had directed, he “took the book of the covenant and *read it* in the ears of the people.” Having been witnesses of the supernatural displays at Mount Sinai, they recognized

4. What place should the Bible have in our lives?
5. (a) If at all possible, what should every one of us possess? (b) In ancient Israel, how did people find out what the Scriptures contained? (c) How does Psalm 19:7-11 affect your attitude toward Bible reading?

Jehovah told Joshua: “You must in an undertone read in it day and night”



that what Moses read to them was from God and that they needed to know this information. (Exodus 19:9, 16-19; 20:22) We too need to know what is recorded in God’s Word.—Psalm 19:7-11.

⁶ As the nation of Israel prepared to cross the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land, thus leaving behind their nomadic life in the wilderness, it was appropriate for them to review Jehovah’s Law and his dealings with them. Impelled by God’s spirit, Moses reviewed the Law with them. He reminded them of details of the Law, and he also highlighted underlying principles and

6. (a) Before the nation of Israel entered the Promised Land, what did Moses do? (b) How might we imitate Moses’ example?

attitudes that were to influence their relationship with Jehovah. (Deuteronomy 4: 9, 35; 7:7, 8; 8:10-14; 10:12, 13) As we today take on new assignments or face new situations in life, we too do well to consider how the counsel of the Scriptures should influence what we are doing.

⁷ Shortly after Israel had crossed the Jordan River, the people again gathered to review what Jehovah had told them by means of Moses. The nation assembled about 30 miles north of Jerusalem. Half the tribes were in front of Mount Ebal, and half were in front of Mount Gerizim. There Joshua "read aloud all the words of the law, the blessing and the malediction." Thus the men, the women, and the little ones, along with the alien residents, heard a timely restatement of the laws governing conduct that would result in Jehovah's disapproval and of the blessings they would receive if they obeyed Jehovah. (Joshua 8:34, 35) They needed to have clearly in mind what was good and what was bad from Jehovah's standpoint. Furthermore, they needed to etch on their hearts a love of what is good and a hatred of what is bad, as does each one of us today.—Psalm 97:10; 119:103, 104; Amos 5:15.

⁸ In addition to readings of the Law on those historic occasions, a provision for regular reading of God's Word was outlined at Deuteronomy 31:10-12. Every seventh year the entire nation was to gather to hear a reading of God's Word. This provided spiritual food for them. It kept alive in their minds and hearts the promises about the Seed and thus served to direct faithful ones

7. Shortly after the Israelites crossed the Jordan, what was done to impress Jehovah's Law on their minds and hearts?

8. What was the benefit of the periodic reading of God's Word at certain national assemblies in Israel?

to the Messiah. The arrangements for spiritual feeding that were instituted when Israel was in the wilderness did not dry up when they entered the Promised Land. (1 Corinthians 10:3, 4) Instead, God's Word was enriched by including the further revelations of the prophets.

⁹ Review of the counsel of God's Word was not to be restricted only to those times when the people were assembled in a large group. Portions of the Word of God and the principles embodied in it were to be discussed every day. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) In most places today, it is possible for young people to have a personal copy of the Bible, and it is very beneficial for them to do so. But in ancient Israel, that was not the case. Back then, when parents gave instruction from God's Word, they had to rely on what they had memorized and on the truths that they cherished in their hearts, along with whatever small excerpts they may have personally written down. By frequent repetition, they would endeavor to build up in their children a love for Jehovah and his ways. The objective was not simply to have a head full of facts but to help each family member to live in such a way as to manifest love for Jehovah and his Word.—Deuteronomy 11:18, 19, 22, 23.

Scripture Reading in the Synagogues

¹⁰ Some time after the Jews were taken into exile in Babylon, synagogues were established as places for worship. In order for God's Word to be read and discussed at these meeting places, more copies of the

9. (a) Was it only when Israelites assembled in large groups that they read the Scriptures? Explain. (b) How was instruction in the Scriptures given within individual families, and with what objective?
10, 11. What program of Scripture reading was followed in the synagogues, and how did Jesus view these occasions?

Scriptures were made. This was a factor in the survival of some 6,000 ancient handwritten copies containing portions of the Hebrew Scriptures.

¹¹ An important segment of the synagogue service was the reading of the Torah, equivalent to the first five books of modern-day Bibles. Acts 15:21 reports that in the first century C.E., such reading was done on every Sabbath, and the Mishnah shows that by the second century, there were also Torah readings on the second and fifth days of the week. A number of individuals shared in reading assigned portions, one after the other. The custom of Jews who lived in Babylon was to read the entire Torah yearly; the custom in Palestine was to spread the reading out over a period of three years. A portion from the Prophets was also read and explained. It was the custom of Jesus to be present for Sabbath Bible-reading programs in the place where he lived.—Luke 4:16-21.

Personal Response and Application

¹² Reading of the inspired Scriptures was not meant to be merely a formalism. It was not done simply to satisfy the curiosity of the people. When Moses read “the book of the covenant” to Israel on the plain facing Mount Sinai, he did so in order that they would know their responsibilities before God and fulfill these. Would they? The reading called for a response. The people recognized that, and they spoke up, saying: “All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do and be obedient.”—Exodus 24:7; compare Exodus 19:8; 24:3.

¹³ Later, when Joshua read to the nation

12. (a) When Moses read the Law to the people, how did the people benefit? (b) How did the people respond?

13. When Joshua read the curses for disobedience, what were the people to do, with what objective?

the promised blessings and the curses, or maledictions, a response was called for. After each of the maledictions, the instruction was given: “And all the people must say, ‘Amen!’” (Deuteronomy 27:4-26) Thus, point by point they went on record as agreeing with Jehovah’s condemnation of the cited wrongs. What an impressive event it must have been when the entire nation thundered its agreement!

¹⁴ In the days of Nehemiah, when all the people gathered in Jerusalem to hear the Law, they saw that they had not been fully carrying out the instructions written there. On that occasion they promptly applied what they learned. What was the result? “Very great rejoicing.” (Nehemiah 8:13-17) After a week of daily Bible reading during the festival, they realized that yet more was required. Prayerfully they reviewed the history of Jehovah’s dealings with his people from the days of Abraham onward. All of this motivated them to take an oath to conform to the requirements of the Law, to refrain from intermarriage with foreigners, and to accept obligations for maintaining the temple and its service.—Nehemiah, chapters 8-10.

¹⁵ Similarly, within the family, teaching the Scriptures was not meant to be a mere formalism. As already seen, in figurative terms at Deuteronomy 6:6-9, the people were told to ‘tie God’s words as a sign upon their hand’—thus demonstrating by example and action their love for Jehovah’s ways. And they were to place God’s words as ‘a frontlet band between their eyes’—thus constantly keeping in view the principles

14. In the days of Nehemiah, why did public reading of the Law prove to be especially beneficial?

15. How do the instructions at Deuteronomy 6:6-9 show that, within families, instruction in God’s Word was not to be a mere formalism?

embodied in the Scriptures and using these as a basis for their decisions. (Compare the language used at Exodus 13:9, 14-16.) They were to 'write them on the doorposts of their houses and on their gates'—thus identifying their homes and their communities as places where God's word was respected and applied. In other words, their lives were to give abundant evidence that they loved and applied Jehovah's righteous precepts. How beneficial that could be! Does God's Word have that sort of prominence in the everyday life of our households? Sadly, the Jews turned all of this into mere formality, wearing scripture-containing cases as if these were charms. Their worship ceased to come from the heart and was rejected by Jehovah.—Isaiah 29:13, 14; Matthew 15:7-9.

Responsibility of Those in Positions of Oversight

¹⁶ In the matter of Scripture reading, special attention was directed to those who were overseers of the nation. To Joshua, Jehovah said: "Take care to do according to all the law." With a view to his fulfilling that

16. Why was regular Scripture reading important for Joshua?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Why have people been willing to risk life and freedom in order to read the Bible?
- ☐ How are we benefited by reviewing provisions that were made for ancient Israel to hear God's Word?
- ☐ What should we do with what we read in the Bible?
- ☐ Why are Bible reading and meditation especially important for Christian elders?

responsibility, he was told: "You must in an undertone read in it day and night, . . . for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely." (Joshua 1:7, 8) As is true of any Christian overseer today, Joshua's regular reading of the Scriptures would help him to keep clearly in mind the specific commandments that Jehovah had given to His people. Joshua also needed to understand how Jehovah had dealt with His servants under various circumstances. As he read statements of God's purpose, it was important for him to think about his own responsibility in connection with that purpose.

¹⁷ Jehovah directed that anyone who served as king over His people was, at the beginning of his kingship, to make a copy of God's Law, basing it on the copy that was kept by the priests. Then he was to "read in it all the days of his life." The objective was not the mere memorizing of its contents. Rather, it was that "he may learn to fear Jehovah his God" and that "his heart may not exalt itself above his brothers." (Deuteronomy 17:18-20) This required that he meditate deeply on what he was reading. Some of the kings evidently thought that they were too busy with administrative duties to do that, and the whole nation suffered as a result of their neglect. The role of elders in the Christian congregation is by no means that of kings. Nevertheless, as was true of the kings, it is vital that elders read and meditate on God's Word. Their doing so will help them to maintain a proper view of those entrusted to their care. It will also enable them to fulfill their responsibility as teachers in a manner that tru-

17. (a) For the kings to benefit from Scripture reading in the way that Jehovah stated, what was needed along with their reading? (b) Why is regular Bible reading and meditation very important for Christian elders?

ly honors God and spiritually fortifies fellow Christians.—Titus 1:9; compare John 7:16-18; contrast 1 Timothy 1:6, 7.

¹⁸ The apostle Paul, a first-century Christian overseer, was one who knew the inspired Scriptures well. When he witnessed to people in ancient Thessalonica, he was able to reason effectively with them from the Scriptures and help them to understand the meaning. (Acts 17:1-4) He reached the

18. What example set by the apostle Paul will a regular reading and study of the Bible help us to imitate?

hearts of sincere listeners. Thus, many who heard him became believers. (1 Thessalonians 2:13) As a result of your program of Bible reading and study, are you able to reason effectively from the Scriptures? Does the place occupied in your life by Bible reading and the way that you do it give evidence that you truly appreciate what it means to have the Word of God in your possession? In the next article, we will consider how a positive answer can be given to these questions even by those whose schedules are very full.

BENEFITING FROM DAILY BIBLE READING

“Happy is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night.”—PSALM 1:1, 2.

“READ GOD’S WORD THE HOLY BIBLE DAILY.” In large letters, those words appear on one side of a building in Brooklyn, New York, where Bibles and Bible literature are printed by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. That admonition is not intended only for people of the world who see the sign. Jehovah’s Witnesses realize that they too need to take it to heart. Those who read the Bible regularly and make personal application of it benefit from the teaching, the reproof, the correction, and the discipline in

1. (a) What prominent sign appears on one side of a factory building at the Watch Tower Society’s world headquarters? (b) How will we benefit if we personally take the admonition to heart?

righteousness that it provides.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

² Jehovah’s Witnesses greatly appreciate their Bible study aids, including *The Watchtower*, and they use these regularly. But they know that none of them take the place of the Bible itself. Back in 1909, Charles Taze Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, wrote to readers of the *Watch Tower* magazine: “Never forget that the Bible is our Standard and that however God-given our helps may be they are ‘helps’ and not substitutes for the Bible.”

2. How did Brother Russell emphasize the importance of Bible reading?

³ The inspired Scriptures have a depth and a force that no other book has. "The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12) The disciple Luke warmly commended people of Berea, calling them "more noble-minded." They not only eagerly received the word as preached by the apostle Paul and his associate Silas but also 'carefully examined the Scriptures daily' to determine the Scriptural basis for what was being taught.—Acts 17:11.

Reading It Daily

⁴ The Bible does not state specifically how often we ought to read it. However, it does record Jehovah's counsel to Joshua to 'read in the book of the law in an undertone day and night' so that he would act wisely and have success in carrying out his God-given assignment. (Joshua 1:8) It tells us that whoever ruled as king over ancient Israel was to read the Scriptures "all the days of his life." (Deuteronomy 17:19) It further states: "Happy is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the wicked ones . . . But his delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night." (Psalm 1:1, 2) Also, the Gospel recorded by Matthew tells us that when Jesus Christ rejected Satan's efforts to tempt Him, He quoted from the inspired Hebrew Scriptures, saying: "It is written, 'Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth.'" (Matthew 4:4) How often do we need physical food? Every day! Tak-

3. (a) What effect does "the word of God" have on those exposed to it? (b) How often were the Bereans reading and studying the Scriptures?
4. What do the Scriptures indicate as to how often we ought to read the Bible?

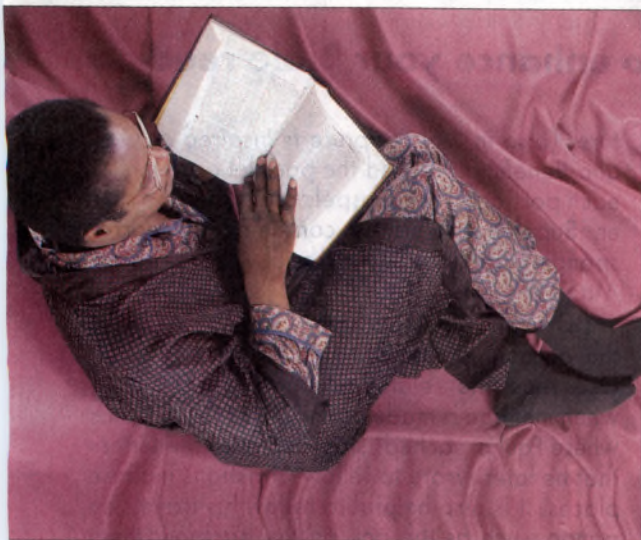
ing in spiritual food daily is even more important because it affects our prospects for eternal life.—Deuteronomy 8:3; John 17:3.

⁵ Every one of us needs to be fortified daily by God's Word. Every day—at home, at work, at school, on the streets, when shopping, in our ministry—challenges to our faith are thrust upon us. How will we deal with these? Will Bible commands and principles readily come to mind? Instead of encouraging a feeling of self-reliance, the Bible cautions: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12) Daily Bible reading will help us to "walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him" instead of allowing the world to squeeze us into its mold.—Colossians 1:9, 10; Romans 12:2.

The Need to Read the Bible Repeatedly

⁶ Reading the Bible is very different from reading a book of fiction. Most popular fiction is designed for a single reading; once a person knows the story and how it ends, that is all there is to it. In contrast, regardless of how many times we have read the Bible, we benefit greatly by doing it again. (Proverbs 9:9) To a discerning person, the Scriptures constantly take on fresh meaning. Prophecies regarding the last days become even more impressive to him in the light of what he has seen, heard, and personally experienced in recent months. (Daniel 12:4) As he broadens his own experience in life and copes with problems, the discerning Bible reader appreciates more fully the counsel that he may formerly have read only casually. (Proverbs 4:18) If he is overtaken with a serious illness, the Bible's

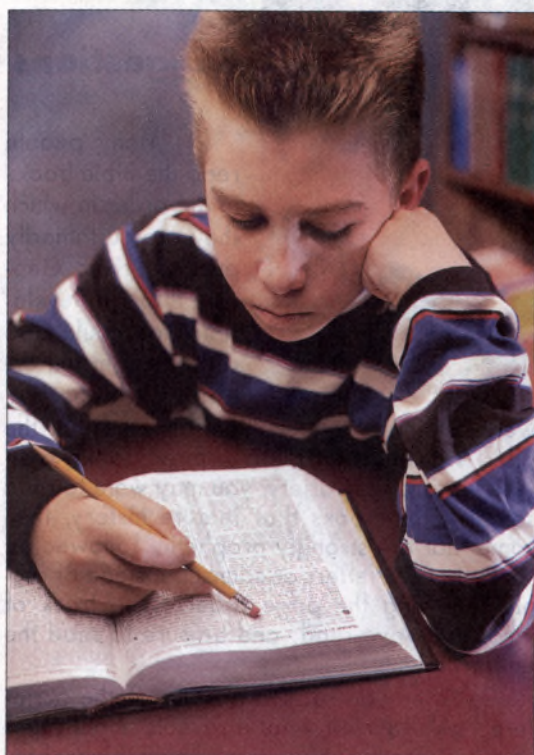
5. How can daily Bible reading help us to "walk worthily of Jehovah" when tests of faith are thrust upon us?
6. Why is it beneficial to read the Bible repeatedly?



promises regarding the removal of pain and the restoration of health take on greater depth of meaning to him than ever before. When close friends and family members die, the promise of a resurrection becomes even more precious.

⁷ You may personally have read the Bible and applied its counsel over a period of

7. What would help us when we take on a new responsibility in life, and why?



Are you reading the Bible or listening to recordings of it every day?

years. But perhaps you are now taking on new responsibilities in life. Are you planning to get married? Are you going to be a parent? Have you been entrusted with responsibility in the congregation as an elder or a ministerial servant? Have you become a full-time evangelizer, with added opportunities for preaching and teaching? How beneficial it would be to read the entire Bible again with those new responsibilities in mind!—Ephesians 5:24, 25; 6:4; 2 Timothy 4:1, 2.

⁸ In the past you may have done well in
8. How may changed circumstances show up the need to learn more about things that we thought we already knew?



Suggestions to enhance your Bible reading

(1) Many people read the Bible books in the order in which they are customarily printed, from Genesis through Revelation. You could also read them in the order in which they

were originally written. Keep in mind that the Bible is a collection of 66 inspired books, a divine library. For variety, you may want to read some of the books that feature history, then some that are strongly prophetic, followed by some that are letters of counsel, instead of simply following the page order. Keep track of what you have read, and be sure to read the entire Bible.

(2) After you read a portion of the Scriptures, ask yourself what it reveals about Jehovah, his purpose, his way of doing things; how it should affect your own life; how you might use it to help someone else.

(3) Using as a guide the chart "Main Events of Jesus' Earthly Life" published under the heading "Jesus Christ" in *Insight on the Scrip-*

tures (also in "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial"), read the parallel accounts of each portion of the Gospels, one after the other. Supplement this by consulting the corresponding sections in the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*.

(4) When you read from Acts of Apostles the account of the life and ministry of Paul, also read the related inspired letters. Thus, when mention is made of various cities or areas where Paul preached, stop and read the letters that he later wrote to fellow Christians in those places. It is also helpful to follow his travels on a map, such as the one on the back endsheet of the *New World Translation*.

(5) Along with your reading of Exodus through Deuteronomy, read the letter to the Hebrews to get an explanation of many of the prophetic patterns. Under "Law" in *Insight on the Scriptures*, consult the chart "Some Features of the Law Covenant."

(6) When reading prophetic books, take time to review related historical background in the Bible. For example, when reading the book of Isaiah, review what is said elsewhere about kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah,

manifesting the fruits of the spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Yet changed circumstances may confront you with the need to learn much more about those godly qualities. (Compare Hebrews 5:8.) A former traveling overseer who found it necessary to leave his special service in order to care for his aging parents said: "I used to think that I was doing reasonably well in manifesting the fruits of the spirit. Now I feel as if I am starting all over again." Likewise, husbands and wives whose marriage mates suffer severe physical or emotional illness may find that in providing personal care, stress oc-

casionally gives rise to reactions that discourage them. Regular Bible reading is a source of great comfort and help.

When Bible Reading Might Be Done

⁹ Of course, for people who are already very busy, finding time to do something additional on a regular basis is a challenge. However, we can benefit from Jehovah's example. The Bible reveals that he does things at 'appointed times.' (Genesis 21:2;

9. (a) What can help a very busy person to find time for daily Bible reading? (b) Why is reading God's Word especially important for elders?

who are mentioned at Isaiah 1:1. (2 Kings, chapters 15-20; 2 Chronicles, chapters 26-32) Or when reading Haggai and Zechariah, take time to review what is found in the book of Ezra.

(7) Select a book of the Bible, read a portion of it (perhaps a chapter), then do research, using the *Watch Tower Publications Index* or the computerized *Watchtower Library* if available in your language. Make application of the material in your own life. Use it in talks and in the field ministry. Then move on to another section.

(8) If there is a Watch Tower publication that provides a commentary on a Bible book or a portion of it, consult it frequently while you are reading that part of the Bible. (For example: on The Song of Solomon, *The Watchtower*, December 1, 1957, pages 720-34; on Ezekiel, "The Nations Shall Know That I Am Jehovah"—How?; on Daniel, "Your Will Be Done on Earth" or *Our Incoming World Government—God's Kingdom*; on Haggai and Zechariah, *Paradise Restored to Mankind—By Theocracy!*; on Revelation, *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!*)

(9) As you read, look up some of the cross-references. Note the 320 passages from the Hebrew Scriptures that are directly quoted in

the Christian Greek Scriptures and the hundreds of other passages to which reference is made, as well as the application given. Cross-references point to fulfillments of prophecy recorded in the Bible, to biographical and geographic details, and to parallel thoughts that may clarify expressions that you perhaps find difficult to understand.

(10) Using the Reference Edition of the *New World Translation*, if available in your language, check footnotes and appendix articles that relate to what you are reading. These show the basis for renderings used and other ways in which important expressions can be translated. You may also want to compare the rendering of certain verses in other Bible translations.

(11) After you read each chapter, write a very brief summary of the main idea in that chapter. Use it as a basis for later review and meditation.

(12) As you read the Bible, mark selected texts that you especially want to remember, or copy them on cards and put these where you will see them every day. Memorize them; meditate on them; make use of them. Do not try to memorize too many at once, perhaps only one or two each week; then select more the next time you read through the Bible.

Exodus 9:5; Luke 21:24; Galatians 4:4) Appreciation for the importance of reading God's Word regularly can help us to appoint a time for it in our daily schedule. (Ephesians 5:15-17) Elders in particular need to set aside time for regular Bible reading so that the counsel they give will be squarely based on Bible principles and so that the spirit they show will reflect "the wisdom from above."—James 3:17; Titus 1:9.

¹⁰ Many who succeed with a program of

10. When do those who are daily Bible readers find time to read?

personal Bible reading do their reading early in the morning before they get started with the day's activities. Others find that they are better able to do it consistently at another time. Bible audiocassettes (where available) help commuters to make good use of travel time, and some Witnesses listen to them while caring for routine household chores. Programs that have worked for a variety of Witnesses in Europe, Africa, North America, South America, and the Orient are shown on pages 20 and 21, in the article "When They Read It and How They Benefit."

¹¹ What is most important is not the amount of time devoted to your Bible reading on any one occasion but the regularity with which it is done. You may find it rewarding to read for an hour or more at a sitting, doing added research and becoming thoroughly engrossed in the material. But does your schedule permit that on a regular basis? Instead of allowing days to pass without any Bible reading at all, would it not be better every day to read for 15 minutes or even for 5 minutes? Make it your resolve to do *daily* Bible reading. Then supplement that reading with deeper research when possible.

Varied Approaches to Bible Reading

¹² There are many ways in which the Bible can be read. It is beneficial to read it from Genesis through Revelation. All members of the global Bethel family who serve at the world headquarters or at one of the Society's branches are required to read the entire Bible during the first year of their Bethel service. (That usually involves reading three to five chapters, depending on their length, or four to five pages, per day.) Students at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead must also read the Bible from cover to cover before they graduate. It is hoped that this will help them to make daily Bible reading a part of their lives.

¹³ It is beneficial for newly baptized Witnesses to set before themselves the goal of reading the entire Bible. In 1975, at the time he was preparing for baptism, a young man in France was asked by an elder whether he had a definite program for

11. How can daily Bible reading be achieved even if available time is quite limited?

12. What program of Bible reading do new members of the Bethel family and Gilead students have?

13. What goal is recommended for newly baptized Witnesses?

Bible reading. Ever since then he has read the entire Bible each year, usually doing his reading in the morning before he goes to work. As to the results, he says: "I have become much better acquainted with Jehovah. I can see how everything he does is related to his purpose and how he responds when obstacles arise. I see that Jehovah is, at the same time, righteous and good in all his actions."

¹⁴ Have you read the entire Bible? If not, now is a good time to start. Outline a definite program, and then hold to it. Determine how many pages or how many chapters you will read each day, or simply determine how much time you will spend and when. Not everyone will complete the Bible in a year, but *the important thing is to read God's Word regularly, doing so daily if at all possible*. As you read through the Bible, you may find the use of certain reference books helpful in impressing on your mind the general outline of the material. If *Insight on the Scriptures* is available in your language, then before you start reading a particular Bible book, review the brief outline of its highlights as provided in *Insight*.^{*} Particularly note the boldface headings in the outline. Or make similar use of the more extensive summary provided in the book "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*."^{*}

¹⁵ Consecutive Bible reading is beneficial, but do not become merely a ritual reader.

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

14. (a) In order to start a program of personal Bible reading that will continue, what is necessary? (b) What might help us to fix in mind the general outline of each Bible book as we read it?

15. (a) What suggestions offered on pages 16 and 17 could help to enhance your Bible reading? (b) Instead of making a ritual of reading a certain number of pages, to what vital matter should we give greater attention?

Do not read a certain number of pages each day simply so that you can say that you read the Bible through every year. As shown in the box "Suggestions to Enhance Your Bible Reading" (pages 16 and 17), there are many ways that you can read and enjoy the Bible. Regardless of the method you use, be sure that you are feeding both your mind and your heart.

Get the Sense of What You Read

¹⁶ When teaching his disciples, Jesus emphasized the importance of their understanding what he said. What was vital was, not a mere intellectual grasp, but their getting "the sense of it with their hearts" so that they would apply it in their lives. (Matthew 13:14, 15, 19, 23) What counts with God is what a person really is inside, and this is what is represented by the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 4:23) Thus, in addition to making sure that we understand what Bible passages say, we need to meditate on them, considering their implications in our own lives.—Psalm 48:9; 1 Timothy 4:15.

¹⁷ Endeavor to identify underlying principles in Bible accounts so that you can apply these to situations that you face. (Compare Matthew 9:13; 19:3-6.) As you read about and meditate on Jehovah's marvelous qualities, use that opportunity to strengthen your personal relationship with him, to develop within yourself a strong sense of godly devotion. When you read statements of Jehovah's purpose, consider what you can do to work in harmony with these. When you read direct counsel, instead of merely saying to yourself, 'I know that,' ask, 'Am I doing what it says?' If so, ask yourself, 'In what ways can I do it

16. Why is it important to take time to meditate on what we read?

17. What are some angles from which we might meditate on what we read in the Scriptures?

"more fully?"' (1 Thessalonians 4:1) As you learn God's requirements, also take note of the Bible's real-life examples of those who lived in harmony with these requirements and those who did not. Consider why they pursued the course they did and what the outcome was. (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11) When you read about the life of Jesus Christ, remember that Jesus is the one to whom Jehovah has entrusted kingship over all the earth; use the opportunity to strengthen within yourself a longing for God's new world. Also, analyze ways in which you can more fully imitate God's Son.—1 Peter 2:21.

¹⁸ Of course, Bible reading should not replace your use of the excellent study material that has been made available through "the faithful and discreet slave." That too is a part of Jehovah's provision—a very precious one. (Matthew 24:45-47) Make sure that regular reading of the Word of God itself has a prominent place in your life. If at all possible, "READ GOD'S WORD THE HOLY BIBLE DAILY."

18. How can we balance Bible reading with our use of study material provided through "the faithful and discreet slave"?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Why is it beneficial to do some Bible reading every day?
- ☐ Why do we need to read the Bible again and again?
- ☐ In your own schedule, what is a good time for daily Bible reading?
- ☐ As you read the Bible repeatedly, what can add variety to your program?
- ☐ Why is it very important to meditate on what we read?

WHEN THEY READ IT AND HOW THEY BENEFIT

Early Morning:

A married couple, both of whom work outside their home, decided to get up just ten minutes earlier each morning and to use that time to read the Bible together before rushing out of the house. What they read provides a basis for wholesome conversation after they leave the house.

An elder in Nigeria uses the program outlined for the Theocratic Ministry School as the basis for family Bible reading in his household. They read a portion of it every day after their discussion of the day's text, usually in the morning. The children are asked to take turns in reading some of the assigned section. Then they are invited to ask questions on the verses that were read.

A housewife in Japan has read the entire Bible once a year since 1985. Her program is to read for 20 to 30 minutes starting at 5:00 a.m. each day. Regarding the benefits, she says: "My faith has been strengthened. It helps me to forget my illness and concentrate on the Paradise hope."

A sister who has been a pioneer for 30 years but whose husband is not a Witness arises at five o'clock each morning to do her Bible reading. Her program calls for reading about four pages from the Hebrew Scriptures, a chapter from the Christian Greek Scriptures, and a verse from the Proverbs. She has read the entire Bible each year since 1959. She says: "As a result of my reading, I feel loved by Jehovah . . . I receive encouragement, comfort, and correction." She adds: "Reading the Bible is

like having Jehovah wind up the spring of my life each day."

A sister who learned the truth in a land where the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned also has a husband who is opposed to her beliefs. She is able to do her Bible reading from Monday through Friday, between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m. This has given her inner strength. Reflecting on how her reading has affected her, she says: "We learn to love Jehovah and Jesus and to live happily, even with problems and difficulties, knowing that Jehovah's promises do not fail."

A sister who had attended the Pioneer Service School was determined to follow through on the counsel given there to make Bible reading a daily practice. At first, she was able to do it between 5:00 and 6:00 a.m. When a job change interfered with that, she switched to between 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. When other challenging situations arose, she says, "I kept adjusting my schedule according to circumstances."

Later in the Day:

Two fleshly sisters who are members of the Brazil Bethel family have the custom of reading the Bible together for about 20 minutes each day after the noon meal. They have read the entire Bible about 25 times; yet they write: "We always find something new, so Bible reading never becomes monotonous."

A single sister in Japan realized that though raised as a Witness, she did not

know the Scriptures well; when she became a pioneer, she determined to read the Bible regularly. She now does her reading for the Theocratic Ministry School while traveling to the hospital for treatment one day each week. Later, at home, she does follow-up research. Toward the end of the week, she does further Bible reading, selecting books according to the order in which they were written.

A 13-year-old who has already read the entire Bible three times is currently reading a chapter every day when he comes home from school. This has, he says, helped him "to feel more love for Jehovah."

A Witness who has a full schedule as a working man, an elder, a husband, and a father listens to Bible audiocassettes while traveling to work on the train. Then at home he does his personal reading of the same material.

In addition to her personal reading, a pioneer in France listens to the Bible audiocassettes when preparing meals, when driving, when going through difficult times, or just for pleasure.

A 21-year-old pioneer in Japan recalls that his mother insisted that he take in something spiritual each day, and he has been reading the Bible daily, though not always at the same time, since he was three years old. After he reads the portion he has selected for the day, he makes it a point to reread key verses, and then he takes a few minutes to review mentally what he has read.

Another Witness, a pioneer, has read the entire Bible about ten times in the past 12 years. Her husband is an unbeliever, so she schedules her reading for the afternoon.

Evening:

An elder and regular pioneer in Japan who reads from his Bible every night be-

fore going to bed has done this for the past eight years. He says: "I am particularly fond of scriptures that indicate how Jehovah thinks, how he feels about matters, and how he handles situations. By meditating on these scriptures, I have been helped to make Jehovah's thinking my own and to assist my Christian brothers and sisters and my family members."

An elder in France has been reading the Bible for an hour each evening since 1979. He often has five or six translations laid out in front of him for comparison. He says that his careful reading has helped him to discern "how to apply Bible knowledge in day-to-day situations." This has also enabled him to be more effective when giving counsel from the Scriptures.

For the past 28 years, a brother in Nigeria has made it a practice to read in the evening the Scripture text provided in *Examining the Scriptures Daily* for discussion the next morning. Along with that, he reads the entire chapter in the Bible from which the text is taken. After he got married, he continued this practice, reading and discussing the material with his wife.

A teenager whose parents are not Witnesses has made it a practice to read for five to ten minutes each night before going to sleep. Those are precious minutes to her, and she prays both before and after the reading. Her goal is to know the message that Jehovah directed each of the Bible writers to record.

A married brother, in Bethel service, says that he has read the Bible once a year for the past eight years. He reads for 20 to 30 minutes before retiring for the night. Even when he is very tired, he finds that if he goes to bed without doing the reading, he cannot sleep. He has to get up and care for that spiritual need.

PERSEVERANCE LEADS TO PROGRESS

AS TOLD BY JOSÉ MAGLOVSKY

When the policeman grasped my arm, I looked for my father. Without my knowing it, however, he had already been taken to the police station. When I arrived there, the policemen seized all our publications, including our Bibles, and piled them on the floor. On seeing this, my father asked: "You put even the Bibles on the floor?" The chief of police apologized, then picked up the Bibles and placed them on the table.

HOW did we end up in the police station? What had we been doing? Were we in an atheistic police state, so that even the Bible was taken away from us? To answer these questions, we will have to go back to 1925, before I was even born.

In that year my father, Estefano Maglovsky, and my mother, Juliana, left what was then Yugoslavia and moved to Brazil, settling in São Paulo. Although Father was a Protestant and Mother a Catholic, religion was not a divisive factor between them. In fact, ten years later something happened that brought them together religiously. Father's brother-in-law brought him a full-color booklet in Hungarian dealing with the condition of the dead. He had received the booklet as a present, and he asked Father to read it and give him his opinion of the contents, especially the part on "hell." Dad spent the whole night reading and rereading the booklet, and the next day, when his brother-in-law came for his opinion, Father categorically declared: "Here is the truth!"

Small Beginnings

Since the publication was from Jehovah's Witnesses, both went looking for them so

as to learn more about their beliefs and teachings. When contact was finally made, several members of our family began to have Bible discussions with the Witnesses. That same year, 1935, a regular Bible study in Hungarian was started, with an average of eight persons attending, and ever since then we have had regular Bible studies in our home.

After two years of studying the Bible, Father was baptized in 1937 and became an enthusiastic Witness of Jehovah, sharing in the house-to-house preaching work and also serving as an appointed servant and study conductor. He aided in the formation of the first congregation in São Paulo, in the Vila Mariana section. The congregation was later transferred to the center of the city and became known as the Central Congregation. Ten years later the second congregation was formed, in the Ypiranga area, and Father was appointed as congregation servant there. In 1954 a third congregation was formed, in the Moinho Velho section, where he also served as congregation servant.

As soon as this group was well consolidated, he began to help a nearby group in São Bernardo do Campo. Thanks to Jehovah's

blessing on the efforts of these small groups of Witnesses during the years, growth has been phenomenal, so that in 1994 there were over 70,000 publishers in the 760 congregations in greater São Paulo. Unhappily, Father did not live to see this growth. He died in 1958 at the age of 57.

Striving to Follow Father's Example

An outstanding characteristic of my father, as with other mature Christians, was his hospitality. (See 3 John 1, 5-8.) As a result, we were privileged to have as guests Antonio Andrade and his wife and son, who came to Brazil from the United States with Brother and Sister Yuille in 1936. Also guests in our home were two graduates of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, Harry Black and Dillard Leathco, who in 1945 were the first missionaries assigned to Brazil. Many others followed them. These brothers and sisters were a constant source of encouragement to everyone in our family. Appreciating this and for the benefit of my family, I have striven to imitate my father's example in regard to the Christian quality of hospitality.

Although I was just nine years old when Father learned the truth in 1935, as the oldest son, I began to accompany him in his theocratic activities. All of us attended meetings with him at the Kingdom Hall located at the Witnesses' headquarters in São Paulo on Eça de Queiroz Street, Number 141. Thanks to the teaching and training that Father gave me, I developed a burning desire to serve Jehovah, and in 1940, I dedicated myself to Jehovah, symbolizing this by water immersion in the now polluted Tietê River, which flows through the center of São Paulo.

I soon learned what it meant to be a regular publisher of the good news, planting and watering the message of truth in oth-

ers and conducting home Bible studies with them. Now, as I see the thousands of dedicated Witnesses of Jehovah in Brazil, I feel deep joy knowing that I was used by Him to help many of them to come to a knowledge of the truth or to deepen their appreciation of it.

Among those I helped was Joaquim Melo, whom I met in the door-to-door ministry. I was talking to three other men who were listening but without much interest. Then I noticed a young lad who had joined us and was listening intently. Seeing his interest, I directed my attention to him and, after a good witness, invited him to the Congregation Book Study. He did not attend the study, but he did show up at the Theocratic Ministry School and thereafter attended meetings regularly. He made good progress, was baptized, and for several years served as a traveling minister, accompanied by his wife.

Then there was Arnaldo Orsi, whom I met at my place of work. I regularly witnessed to a fellow worker but noticed that a bearded

My parents, Estefano and Juliana Maglovsky



young man always listened in, so I began to talk directly to him. He was of a staunch Catholic family but asked many questions about such matters as smoking, watching pornographic films, and practicing the martial art of judo. I showed him what the Bible had to say, and to my joyful surprise, the next day he called me over to watch as he broke his pipe and lighter along with his crucifix, destroyed his pornographic films, and shaved off his beard. A changed man in a matter of minutes! He also stopped practicing judo and asked to study the Bible with me daily. In spite of opposition from his wife and father, he made good progress spiritually with the help of the brothers who lived near him. In a short time, he was baptized and today serves as a congregation elder. His wife and children also accepted the truth.

Sharing in Kingdom Service

When I was about 14 years of age, I started to work in an advertising firm, where I learned how to paint signs. This proved very useful, and for several years I was the only brother in São Paulo used to paint the placards and overhead street signs advertising public discourses and conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses. For nearly 30 years, I had the privilege of serving as overseer of the convention Sign Department. I always saved my vacations so as to work at the conventions, even sleeping in the convention hall in order to get the signs painted on time.

I also had the opportunity to work with the Society's sound car, which was a real novelty at the time. We would place our Bible publications on a stand, and as the sound car broadcast a recorded message, we would talk to the people who came out of their homes to see what was happening. Another means we employed to make known the good news of the Kingdom was the porta-

ble gramophone, and I still have the records used to present the Society's publications. Much Bible literature was placed as a result.

In those days the Catholic Church had long processions in the streets of São Paulo, often with men out in front clearing the way. One Sunday, Father and I were offering *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* on the street when a long procession appeared. Father, as was his custom, was wearing his hat. One of the men in front of the procession shouted: "Take off your hat! Don't you see that a procession is coming?" When Father did not remove his hat, more men came, pushing us aside against a store window and creating a disturbance. This caught the attention of a policeman, who came to see what was happening. One of the men took him by the arm, wanting to talk with him. "Take your hand off my uniform!" the policeman ordered, slapping the man's hand. Then he asked what was going on. The man explained that Father would not remove his hat for the procession, adding: "I am an apostolic Roman Catholic." The unexpected answer was: "You say you are a Roman? Then go back to Rome! This is Brazil." Then he turned to us, asking: "Who was here first?" When Father answered that we were, the policeman sent the men away and told us to continue with our work. He stood beside us until the whole procession had passed—and Father's hat stayed on!

Incidents such as this were rare. But when they did happen, it was encouraging to know that there were people who believed in justice for minorities and who were not kowtowing to the Catholic Church.

On another occasion, I met a teenager who showed interest and asked me to return the next week. Upon my return he received me well and asked me inside. How surprised I was to find myself surrounded by a gang

of youths mocking and trying to provoke me! The situation worsened, and I felt that they would soon attack me. I told the one who had invited me in that if anything happened to me, he would be solely responsible and that my family knew where I was. I asked them to let me go, and they agreed. However, before leaving, I said that if any of them wanted to talk to me alone, I would be available. Later, I learned that they were a group of fanatics, friends of the local priest who had put them up to this meeting. I was happy to be out of their grasp.

In the beginning, of course, progress in Brazil was slow, almost imperceptible. We were in the initial phase of "planting," with little time available for "cultivating" and "harvesting" the fruits of our labors. We always remembered what the apostle Paul wrote: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow; so that neither is he that plants anything nor is he that waters, but God who makes it grow." (1 Corinthians 3:6, 7) With the arrival of the first two graduates of Gilead in 1945, we felt that the time had arrived for this long-awaited growth.

Boldness in the Face of Opposition

Growth was not to come without opposition, however, especially after World War II began in Europe. There was outright persecution because the people in general and some of the authorities did not understand our neutral stand. On one occasion, in 1940, while we were doing street work with placards in the center of São Paulo, a policeman came up to me from behind, ripped off the placards, and seized me by the arm to take me to the police station. I looked around for my father, but he was nowhere to be seen. Unknown to me, he and several other brothers and sisters, including Brother Yuille, who had oversight of the work in Brazil, had already been taken to the police station. As

indicated in the opening paragraph, there I met Father again.

Since I was a minor, I could not be detained and was soon taken home by a policeman and handed over to my mother. That same evening the sisters were also released. Later the police decided to release all the brothers, about ten in number, except Brother Yuille. However, the brothers insisted: "Either we all go or no one does." The policemen were adamant, so all spent the night together in a cold room on a cement floor. The next day all were released unconditionally. Several times brothers were arrested for witnessing with placards. The signs announced a public talk and also a booklet entitled *Fascism or Freedom*, and some authorities took it to mean that we were in favor of Fascism, which naturally led to misunderstandings.

Compulsory military service also presented problems for the young brothers. In 1948, I was the first one imprisoned in Brazil over this issue. The authorities just did not know what to do with me. I was transferred to the army barracks in Caçapava and put to work planting and caring for vegetables in the garden as well as cleaning the room used by the officials for fencing. I had many opportunities to witness and to place publications with the men. The officer in

In Our Next Issue

**Soon—A New Life
for Our Ancestors**

Flashes of Light in Apostolic Times

He Was the Messiah's Forerunner



José and Barbara with members of their family of dedicated servants of Jehovah

charge was the first to accept a copy of the Society's book *Children*. Later, I was even assigned to give classes on religion to about 30 or 40 soldiers who were unable to exercise and were confined to a room. Finally, after about ten months in prison, I was brought to trial and released. I feel grateful to Jehovah, who gave me the strength to face up to the threats, indignities, and mockery that I received from some of the men.

A Faithful and Loyal Helper

On June 2, 1951, I married Barbara, and since then she has been a loyal and faithful companion in educating our children and raising them in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) Of our five children, four are joyfully serving Jehovah in different capacities. Our hope is that, together with us, they will continue to persevere in the truth and to contribute to the progress of the organization and the work being done. The family members in the accompanying photograph are all dedicated

servants of Jehovah except the youngest, a babe in arms. Four are elders and two are also regular pioneers, illustrating the truthfulness of Proverbs 17:6: "The crown of old men is the grandsons, and the beauty of sons is their fathers."

Now, at 68 years of age, my health is not the best. In 1991, I submitted to a triple-bypass operation and later to angioplasty. However, I am happy to be able to continue to serve as presiding overseer in a congregation in São Bernardo do Campo, following in the footsteps of my father, who was among the first to initiate the work here. Our generation is indeed unique, having the opportunity to share in the never-to-be-repeated privilege of announcing the establishment of Jehovah's Messianic Kingdom. So we must never forget Paul's words to Timothy: "You, though, . . . do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry."—2 Timothy 4:5.

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Young Ones Declare the Good News in Africa

SHORTLY after Jesus' resurrection, an African man was visiting Jerusalem. The Bible does not give his name. He is known only as "a man in power under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, and who was over all her treasure." Why is he mentioned in the Bible? Because an angel directed the Christian evangelizer Philip to declare to him "the good news about Jesus." This Ethiopian man was the first African on record to become a member of the Christian congregation.—Acts 8:26-39.



Priya's mother arranged for a Witness to study the Bible with Una. Soon Una herself was sharing what she was learning with her workmate Dolly. In the meantime, 11-year-old Priya continued to make progress and decided to symbolize her dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism at a district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. At that same convention, much to Priya's delight, Una and Dolly were also baptized!

Today, there are hundreds of thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses in Africa. They use every opportunity to share with others the good news about Jesus. The following experiences show that even young ones in Africa have a role to play in this.

□ Sandy and Priya, two 11-year-old girls in Nairobi, Kenya, were neighbors. They enjoyed playing together and exchanging storybooks. Priya's parents began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Now Priya had a selection of new books to add to her collection, including one in particular that became her favorite, *Listening to the Great Teacher*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. She shared her *Great Teacher* book with her friend Sandy, and the two girls began to study it regularly.

However, Sandy's mother, Una, attended the Anglican Church and did not want her daughter to read books from Jehovah's Witnesses. Despite the mother's opposition, the study continued. One day Sandy pleaded with her mom to listen to their discussion just once. The chapter the girls read that day was entitled "Two Men Who Celebrated Birthdays." Una listened and was very impressed. She quickly approached Priya's mother with many Bible questions.

□ There are some African countries where the work of Jehovah's Witnesses is not registered. In one such land, there is a general climate of tolerance toward the religious activities and beliefs of the Witnesses. In one school in that land, a seven-year-old boy and his six-year-old brother—children of Witnesses—were allowed to excuse themselves during the time of religious prayers.

One day a new teacher demanded that the boys join in prayer with the other children. The older boy refused and was beaten by the teacher. His younger brother, six-year-old Shadrack, insisted on seeing the headmaster in his office. The headmaster and the new teacher asked him why he did not want to join with the others. They asked him if he was afraid of being beaten by his parents. He answered in very good Arabic: "No, the God I worship is not a God of confusion but of order. I cannot be one of Jehovah's Witnesses at home and another religion at school!" As a result, he was given exemption.

After being baptized, the Ethiopian man mentioned in the book of Acts "kept going on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:39) Likewise today, the Kingdom proclaimers in the vast continent of Africa rejoice in their privilege of "declaring the good news about Jesus."—Acts 8:35.

WHAT WILL YOUR BUSINESS COST YOU?

THE wife of the president of a South American country was accused of funneling hundreds of thousands of dollars in contracts to phony companies set up by members of her family. A 38-year-old stockbroker in India was arrested and taken away from his luxurious apartment and his 29 cars because of his alleged involvement in a \$1.6-billion banking and stock market scandal. In the Philippines, thousands of residents of one island make their living by producing illegal handguns. To stay in this lucrative trade, it is reported, they customarily bribe officials not to interfere.

Yes, dishonesty and fraud in business are rampant throughout the world. And often it costs the people involved position and honor, as well as money.

What about you? Are you in business? Or are you thinking of starting a business? What will it cost you? Inevitably, being in business will cost something. This is not necessarily bad. However, it is wise to count the cost before embarking on a business venture or making decisions regarding one already established. (Luke 14:28) The box on page 31 shows some costs that you will want to take into consideration.

Clearly, being in business is not simple. For a Christian, there are spiritual and moral obligations to consider. Can you meet the costs and stay balanced spiritually? Are certain costs beyond what you can accept morally? What are some principles that will help you determine which costs are acceptable and which are not?

Keep Money in Its Place

Money is needed to run a business, and it is hoped that a business will bring in enough funds to sustain one's family. However, goals with regard to money can easily get distorted. Greed may enter the picture. For many people, everything else gets set aside where money is involved. Yet, one writer of the Bible book of Proverbs, Agur, expressed the balanced viewpoint when he said: "Give me neither poverty nor riches. Let me devour the food prescribed for me." (Proverbs 30:8) He realized the value of being satisfied with a sufficient amount for sustenance—he did not want to "make a killing," as some say in business.

Greed, though, can cause one to forget this principle when that so-called golden opportunity arises. A traveling minister of Jehovah's Witnesses in a developing country reported on such a case. A certain company needing investment capital gave the impression that investors would quickly double their money, perhaps in just a few months. This easy-money offer led many to invest. The traveling minister says: "Some were too eager to jump into it. They weren't asking enough questions, and they borrowed money [to invest]."

In contrast, two individuals went to check out the office of this company before investing. Their request to see the production facilities was denied. This caused them to doubt the reputability of the company. It proved to be a protection for them, since within a few weeks, an apparently fraudulent scheme was exposed, and people were

arrested. Just think what this cost those who had not investigated first. They lost not only money but perhaps even friends who lent to them but could not be repaid when the scheme collapsed. In money matters, how wise it is to apply the principle of Proverbs 22:3: "Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself, but the inexperienced have passed along and must suffer the penalty!"

Stick to Your Word

What if business takes a turn for the worse? Psalm 15:4 commends a person who sticks to his agreements even if doing so is not to his advantage: "He has sworn to what is bad for himself, and yet he does not alter." It is easy to stick to one's word when things are going well. But it becomes a test of integrity when it is to one's disadvantage financially.

Recall a Biblical example from the time of Joshua. The Gibeonites maneuvered matters so that the chieftains of Israel would covenant with them and not destroy them. Actually, they were part of a nation that was considered a threat to Israel. When the ruse was uncovered, "the sons of Israel did not strike them, because the chieftains of the assembly had sworn to them by Jehovah." (Joshua 9:18) Even though this group came from enemy territory, the chieftains felt it important to keep their word. And subsequent events show that this pleased Jehovah.—Joshua 10:6-11.

Will you too stick to your business agreements and contracts even if things do not go as you expected?* Doing so will make you more like Jehovah, who always sticks to his word.—Isaiah 55:11.

* For a modern-day example of sticking to one's word in business, see the article "My Word My Bond" in *Awake!* of May 8, 1988, pages 11-13.

Be Honest

Honesty is like an endangered, if not extinct, species in today's business world. Others in businesses similar to yours may use dishonest means to increase their earnings. They may be dishonest in advertising. They may steal the name of another company and put it on their product. Or they may present an inferior product as one of superior quality. All of these are forms of dishonesty. Those doing them are like "the wicked" who, according to Asaph, "have increased their means of maintenance," apparently in a fraudulent way.—Psalm 73:12.

Will you, as a Christian, use illicit methods? Or would you rather be guided by Bible principles, such as: "We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one"; "we have renounced the underhanded things of which to be ashamed, not walking with cunning"; "two sorts of weights are something detestable to Jehovah, and a cheating pair of scales is not good"? (2 Corinthians 4:2; 7:2; Proverbs 20:23) Remember, the originator of dishonesty is none other than Satan the Devil, "the father of the lie."—John 8:44.

Some may object and say: 'It is difficult to stay in business unless one uses dishonest methods as others do.' This is where the Christian can demonstrate his faith in Jehovah. Honesty is put to the test when it costs something. To say that a person cannot make a living without being dishonest is to say that God does not care about those who love him. One with true faith in Jehovah knows that God can provide for his servants in any country and in any situation. (Hebrews 13:5) True, one may have to settle for a little less income than dishonest ones may have, but is this not a price worth paying to have God's blessing?

Remember, dishonesty is like a boomerang that, when thrown, comes back to the thrower. If a businessman is found to be dishonest, customers and suppliers will often forsake him. He may fool them once, but that may be the last time. On the other hand, an honest businessman usually gains the respect of others. Be careful not to be overtaken by the false reasoning, 'Everybody else does it, so it's OK.' The Bible principle is, "You must not follow after the crowd for evil ends."—Exodus 23:2.

Suppose your long-standing business partner is not a fellow Christian and does not always adhere to Bible principles. Would it be proper to use this as an excuse to evade your own responsibility when something unscriptural is being done? Remember examples like Adam and Saul. Instead of avoiding sin, they gave in to pressure from others and then blamed their associates. What a high price they paid!—Genesis 3:12, 17-19; 1 Samuel 15:20-26.

Deal Properly With Fellow Believers

Are there costs to consider when entering into business dealings with fellow worshipers of Jehovah? When the prophet Jeremiah purchased a field in his hometown of Anathoth from his own cousin, he did not just give him the money and shake hands. Rather, he said: "I wrote in a deed and affixed the seal and took witnesses as I went weighing the money in the scales." (Jeremiah 32:10) Making such written agreements can prevent misunderstandings that could arise at a later time if circumstances change.

But what if a Christian brother seems to have treated you unfairly in business? Should you take him to court? The Bible is very clear on this. "Does anyone of you that has a case against the other dare to go to court before unrighteous men, and not be-

fore the holy ones?" asked Paul. What if a problem is not satisfactorily resolved right away? Paul added: "It means altogether a defeat for you that you are having lawsuits with one another. Why do you not rather let yourselves be wronged? Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded?" Just think what a black mark it would put on the Christian organization if outsiders heard of true Christians fighting it out in court! Could it be that in such cases the love of money has become stronger than love for brother? Or could it be that one's honor has been tarnished and retaliation is foremost in mind? Paul's counsel shows that in such cases it would be better to take a loss than to go to court.—1 Corinthians 6:1, 7; Romans 12:17-21.

There is, of course, a Scriptural way to handle such disputes within the congregation. (Matthew 5:37; 18:15-17) In helping the brothers involved to follow the recommended steps, Christian overseers may offer some helpful counsel for all concerned. It may seem easy during such discussions to agree with Bible principles, but afterward will you really show that you listened by applying the counsel given? Love for God and for our fellow Christians would impel us to do so.

Undoubtedly, being in business is going to cost you something. Hopefully, the price you pay will be reasonable. When confronted with decisions or any questionable situation, keep in mind that there are many things in life that are far more valuable than money. By keeping money in its place, keeping one's word, being honest, and dealing with business associates in the Christian way, we can see to it that a business costs no more time and money than necessary, and at the same time, we can preserve friendships, a good conscience, and a fine relationship with Jehovah.



Which will help prevent later misunderstandings? A gentleman's agreement or a written contract?



Things Your Business Might Cost You

Time: Running one's own business almost always takes more time than working as an employee for a company. Will this cut into your schedule, leaving less time for important spiritual activities? On the positive side, will you be able to arrange your affairs to spend more time in doing God's will? If so, fine. But be careful! This is easier said than done.

Money: It takes money to make money. What investment is required for your business? Do you already have the funds? Or will you have to borrow? Can you afford to lose some? Or will the cost be more than you can bear if things do not work out as expected?

Friends: Because of problems arising in day-to-day operations, many an entrepreneur's business has cost him his friends. Although a potential for making friends is there, the possibility of

strained relations is all too real. What if these friends are our Christian brothers?

A Good Conscience: The general approach to business in today's world is "Dog eat dog" or "What's in it for me?" Over 70 percent of the students in a European survey held that ethics have little or no place in business life. It is no wonder that fraud, dishonesty, and questionable business practices have become commonplace. Will you be tempted to follow suit?

Your Relationship With Jehovah: Any action in business that is against God's laws and principles, even though common in business affairs, would spoil a person's relationship with his Maker. This could cost him his prospect of eternal life. Would this not obviously be too high a price for a loyal Christian to pay, no matter what the material benefit?

“Joyful Praisers” Convention

JOY! Does that word sound strange, even foreign, in this trouble-filled time? Certainly the newspapers do not give many reasons for joy. Ethnic warfare, widespread hunger, unemployment, dangerous pollution, political instability, crime—these are not things to fill the heart with joy, are they?

Most people today snatch whatever pleasure they can from life. But joy? Joy has been described as a “state of happiness; exultation.” Not too many have experienced real joy, and when they do, it is often very temporary.

Yet, looking forward to our day, the Bible foretold: “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said: “Look! My own servants will rejoice. Look! My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart.” (Isaiah 65:13, 14) How can that be?

