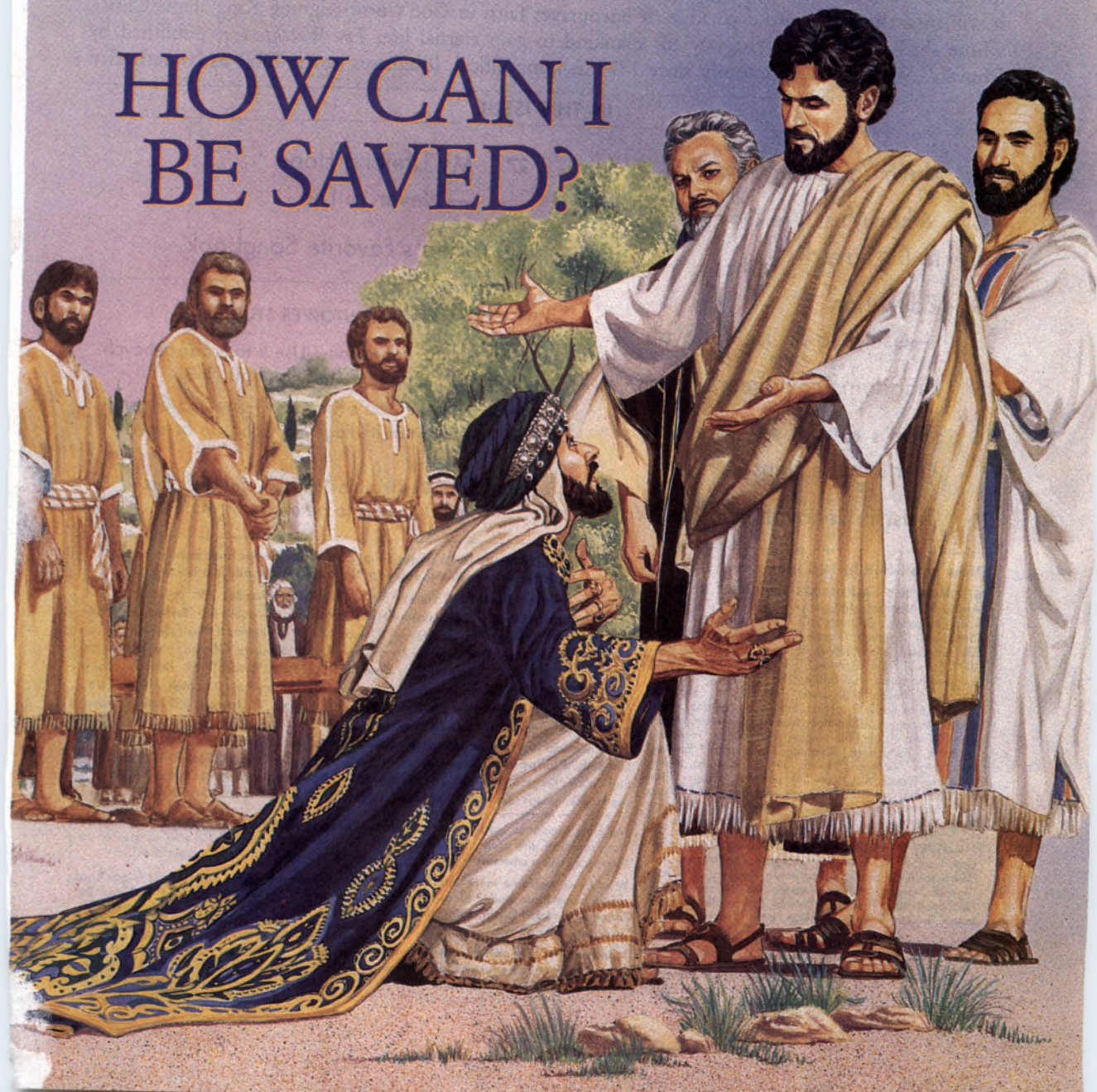


THE WATCHTOWER
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

FEBRUARY 1, 1996

HOW CAN I
BE SAVED?



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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JOHNNY was ten years old when a man stopped him at a fair and asked: "Young man, do you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?" That sounded like a rather

HAVE YOU BEEN SAVED?

strange question to Johnny, since he had always believed in Jesus. So he answered, "Of course I do." "Praise the Lord!" the man shouted for all to hear. "Another soul saved for Christ!"

Is salvation really that simple? Was Johnny "saved" from the moment he said those words, regardless of what he would do for the rest of his life? Many sincere people would answer yes. Some religious tracts say to write down the date you were "saved" so that you can remember it.

A clergyman wrote that at "the moment of simple faith in Christ . . .

one's destiny is permanently settled." He claimed that the Bible says that salvation depends on a single, one-time "act of faith, not on the *continuity* of faith." Another religion writer wrote: "This is a *finished* work. It has *already* been accomplished for you . . . Your 'warfare has ended.' Your 'iniquity has been removed.'" But even people who are firmly convinced that this is true may see a problem here. It is obvious that many people who have been told that they are "saved" do not live the way the Bible says they should. A common explanation is that perhaps they had not really "accepted" Christ.

So, what does "accepting" Jesus really mean? Is it a one-time act of faith, or is it a continuing way of life? Must our belief be strong enough to motivate us to action? Can we really accept the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice without the responsibility of following him?

Many people want the blessings but not the responsibility of following and obeying Jesus. In fact, the word "obey" often disturbs them. Yet Jesus said: "Come be my follower." (Luke 18:18-23) And the Bible states: "Those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus . . . will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction." —2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9; Matthew 10:38; 16:24.

The Bible says many things that raise serious questions about what has been taught about salvation. If you would like to verify what the Bible actually says on this subject, you will find the following pages to be particularly interesting. Open your Bible, and read the cited texts to see what Jesus and his apostles taught about this vital matter.

A MAN once asked Jesus: "Lord, are those who are being saved few?" How did Jesus reply? Did he say: 'Just accept me as your Lord and Savior, and you will be saved'? No! Jesus said: "Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because

WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able."—Luke 13:23, 24.

Did Jesus fail to answer the man's question? No, the man did not ask how hard it would be to be saved; he asked if the number would be few. So Jesus merely indicated that fewer people than one might expect would exert themselves vigorously to receive this marvelous blessing.

'That's not what I was told,' some readers

may protest. These may quote John 3:16, which says: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (*King James Version*) However, we reply: 'What, then, must we believe? That Jesus actually lived? Of course. That he is the Son of God? By all means! And since the Bible calls Jesus "Teacher" and "Lord," must we not also believe what he taught, obey him, and follow him?'—John 13:13; Matthew 16:16.

Following Jesus

Ah, here the problem arises! Many people who have been told that they are "saved" seem to have little intention of either following or obeying Jesus. In fact, a Protestant clergyman wrote: "Of course, our faith in Christ *should* continue. But the claim that it absolutely must, or necessarily does, has no support at all in the Bible."

On the contrary, the Bible lists immoral practices that are common among some people who think that they are "saved." Regarding one who continued in such ways, it instructed Christians: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves." Surely God would not want wicked people contaminating his Christian congregation!—1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

What does it mean, then, to *follow* Jesus, and how can we do that? Well, what did Jesus do? Was he immoral? a fornicator? a drunkard? a liar? Was he dishonest in business? Of course not! 'But,' you may ask, 'do I have to clean all those things out of my life?' For the answer, consider Ephesians 4:17 through 5:5. It does not say that God will accept us no matter what we do. Instead, it tells us to be different from the worldly nations who have "come to be past all moral sense, . . . but you did not learn the Christ to be so . . . Put away the old personality

which conforms to your former course of conduct . . . Let the stealer steal no more . . . Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people . . . For you know this, recognizing it for yourselves, that no fornicator or unclean person or greedy person—which means being an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and of God.”

Are we following Jesus if we do not at least try to live in harmony with his example? Do we not have to work on making our lives more Christlike? That vital question is rarely, if ever, considered by people who say, as one religious tract does: “Come to Christ now—just as you are.”

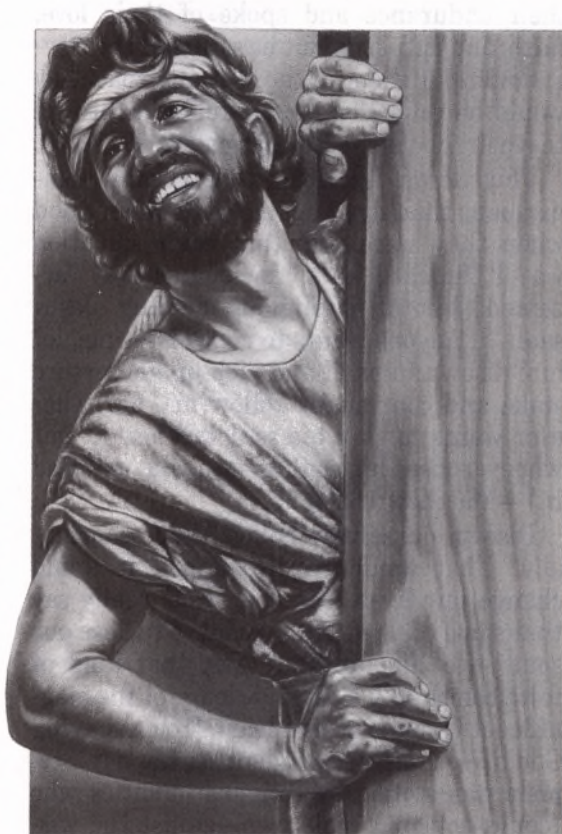
One of Jesus’ disciples warned that ungodly men were “turning the undeserved kindness of our God into an excuse for loose conduct and proving false to our only Owner and Lord, Jesus Christ.” (Jude 4) How might we, in fact, turn God’s mercy “into an excuse for loose conduct”? We could do so by assuming that Christ’s sacrifice covers deliberate sins that we intend to keep on committing rather than sins of human imperfection that we are trying to put behind us. Surely we would not want to agree with one of America’s best-known evangelists, who said that you do not have to “clean up, give up, or turn around.”—Contrast Acts 17:30; Romans 3:25; James 5:19, 20.

Belief Prompts Action

Many people have been told that “believing in Jesus” is a single act and that our faith does not have to be strong enough to prompt obedience. But the Bible disagrees. Jesus did not say that people who *begin* the Christian course are saved. Instead, he said: “He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved.” (Matthew 10:22) The Bible likens our Christian course to a race,

with salvation being the prize at its end. And it urges: “Run in such a way that you may attain it.”—1 Corinthians 9:24.

Thus, “accepting Christ” involves far more than just accepting the blessings that Jesus’ superlative sacrifice offers. Obedience is required. The apostle Peter says that



judgment starts “with the house of God,” and adds: “Now if it starts first with us, what will the end be of those who are not *obedient* to the good news of God?” (1 Peter 4:17) So we must do more than simply hear and believe. The Bible says that we must “become doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving [ourselves] with false reasoning.”—James 1:22.

Jesus' Own Messages

The Bible book of Revelation contains messages from Jesus, transmitted through John to seven early Christian congregations. (Revelation 1:1, 4) Did Jesus say that since the people in these congregations had already "accepted" him, that was sufficient? No. He praised their deeds, their labor and their endurance and spoke of their love, faith, and ministry. But he said that the Devil would put them to the test and that they would be rewarded "individually according to [their] deeds."—Revelation 2:2, 10, 19, 23.

Thus Jesus described a far greater commitment than most people have understood when they were told that their salvation was a "finished work" as soon as they "accepted" him at a religious meeting. Jesus said: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me. For whoever wants to save his soul will lose it; but whoever loses his soul for my sake will find it."—Matthew 16:24, 25.

Disown ourselves? Follow Jesus continually? That would require effort. It would change our lives. Yet, did Jesus really say that some of us might even have to 'lose our souls'—to *die* for him? Yes, that kind of faith comes only with knowledge of the magnificent things you can learn from studying God's Word. It was evident on the day Stephen was stoned by religious fanatics who "could not hold their own against the wisdom and the spirit with which he was speaking." (Acts 6:8-12; 7:57-60) And such faith has been demonstrated in our time by the hundreds of Jehovah's Witnesses who died in Nazi concentration camps rather than violate their Bible-trained consciences.*

* In her book *The Nazi State and the New Religions: Five Case Studies in Non-Conformity*, Dr. Christine E. King reported: "One out of every two German [Jehovah's] Witnesses was imprisoned, one in four lost their lives."

Christian Zeal

We must hold firmly to our Christian faith because, unlike what you may hear in some churches or on religious television programs, the Bible says we *can* fall away. It tells of Christians who abandoned "the straight path." (2 Peter 2:1, 15) We thus need to 'keep working out our own salvation with fear and trembling.'—Philippians 2:12; 2 Peter 2:20.

Is this how first-century Christians, the people who actually heard Jesus and his apostles teach, understood the matter? Yes. They knew that they had to *do* something. Jesus said: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

Some weeks after Jesus said that, 3,000 people were baptized in just one day. The number of believers quickly grew to 5,000. Those who believed taught others. When persecution scattered them, it only served to spread their message. The Bible says that not just a few leaders but "those who had been scattered went through the land declaring the good news of the word." Some 30 years later, the apostle Paul could therefore write that the good news had been "preached in all creation that is under heaven."—Acts 2:41; 4:4; 8:4; Colossians 1:23.

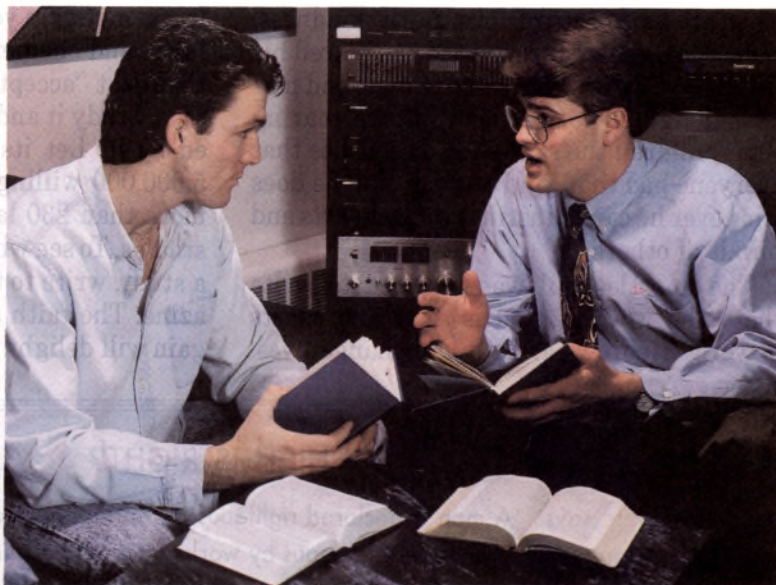
Paul did not make converts, as some TV evangelists do, by saying: 'Accept Jesus right now, and you will forever be saved.' Nor did he have the confidence of the American clergyman who wrote: "As a teenage boy, . . . I was already saved." More than 20 years after Jesus personally chose Paul to carry the Christian message to people of the nations, this hardworking apostle wrote: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow."—1 Corinthians 9:27; Acts 9:5, 6, 15.

Study the Bible, and be motivated by it

Salvation is a free gift from God. It cannot be earned. Yet it does require effort on our part. If someone offered you a very valuable gift and you did not show enough appreciation to pick it up and take it with you, your lack of gratitude might prompt the giver to present it to someone else. Well, how valuable is the lifeblood of Jesus Christ?

It is a free gift, but we must demonstrate deep appreciation for it.

True Christians are in a saved condition in that they are in an approved position before God. As a group, their salvation is sure. Individually, they must meet God's requirements. However, we can fail, for Jesus said: "If anyone does not remain in union with me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up."
—John 15:6.



'God's Word Is Alive'

The conversation mentioned at the beginning of the preceding article occurred nearly 60 years ago. Johnny still believes that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ, but he realizes that we have to reach out for it. He remains convinced that the Bible points to the only real source of hope for mankind and that we must study that marvelous book, be moved by it, and let it

WHY "PUT UP A HARD FIGHT FOR THE FAITH"?

The Bible book of Jude is addressed to "called ones . . . , preserved for Jesus Christ." Does it say that because they had 'accepted Jesus,' their salvation was sure? No, Jude told such Christians to "put up a hard fight for the faith." He gave them three reasons for doing so. First, God "saved a people out of the land of Egypt," but many of them later fell away. Second, even angels rebelled and became demons. Third, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of the gross sexual immorality practiced in those cities. Jude presents these Biblical accounts "as a warning example." Yes, even believers "preserved for Jesus Christ" have to exercise care not to fall away from the true faith.—Jude 1-7.

motivate us to acts of love, faith, kindness, obedience, and endurance. He has reared his children to believe the same things, and now he is delighted to see them in turn rearing their children the same way. He wishes that everyone had that kind of faith, and he does whatever he can to instill it in the hearts and minds of others.

The apostle Paul was inspired to write that "the word of God is alive and exerts power." (Hebrews 4:12) It can change lives.

It can motivate you to heartfelt acts of love, faith, and obedience. But you must do more than just "accept" mentally what the Bible says. Study it and let your heart be motivated by it. Let its wisdom guide you. Some 5,000,000 willing Witnesses of Jehovah in more than 230 lands offer free home Bible studies. To see what you can learn from such a study, write to the publishers of this magazine. The faith and spiritual strength you gain will delight you!

WHICH IS RIGHT?

The Bible says: "A man is declared righteous by faith apart from works of law." It also says: "A man is to be declared righteous by works, and not by faith alone." Which is right? Are we declared righteous by faith or by works?—Romans 3:28; James 2:24.

The harmonious answer from the Bible is that both are correct.

For centuries the Law that God gave through Moses had required Jewish worshipers to make specific sacrifices and offerings, to observe festival days, and to conform to dietary and other requirements. Such "works of law," or simply "works," were no longer necessary after Jesus provided the ultimate sacrifice.—Romans 10:4.

But the fact that these works performed under the Mosaic Law were replaced by Jesus' superlative sacrifice did not mean that we can ignore the Bible's instructions. It says: "How much more will the blood of the Christ . . . cleanse our consciences from [the older] dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God?"—Hebrews 9:14.

How do we "render sacred service to the living God"? Among other things, the Bible tells us to combat the works of the flesh, to resist the world's immorality, and to avoid its snares. It says: "Fight the fine fight of the faith," put off "the sin that easily entangles us," and "run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus." And the Bible urges us not to 'get tired and give out in our souls.'—1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 12:1-3; Galatians 5:19-21.

We do not *earn* salvation by doing these things, for no human could ever do enough to merit such an astounding blessing. We are not worthy of this magnificent gift, though, if we fail to demonstrate our love and obedience by doing the things that the Bible says God and Christ want us to do. Without works to demonstrate our faith, our claim to follow Jesus would fall far short, for the Bible clearly states: "Faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself."—James 2:17.

EDUCATION—USE IT TO PRAISE JEHOVAH

“He that speaks of his own originality is seeking his own glory; but he that seeks the glory of him that sent him, this one is true.”—JOHN 7:18.

EDUCATION began a long, long time ago. It was soon after Jehovah God, the Great Educator and Instructor, created his firstborn Son that the process of education had its beginning. (Isaiah 30:20; Colossians 1:15) Here was One who could learn from the Great Educator himself! During countless millenniums of intimate association with the Father, that Son—who came to be known as Jesus Christ—received a priceless education in the qualities, works, and purposes of Jehovah God. Later, as a man on earth, Jesus could say: “I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father *taught* me I speak these things.”—John 8:28.

² How did Jesus use the education he had received? Throughout his three-and-a-half-year earthly ministry, he tirelessly shared with others what he had learned. This, however, was with a primary purpose in mind. And what was that? Let us examine Jesus’ words in John chapter 7, where he explained both the origin and the purpose of his teaching.

³ Consider the setting. It was the autumn of 32 C.E., nearly three years after Jesus’

baptism. The Jews were gathered in Jerusalem for the Festival of Tabernacles. During the first few days of the festival, there had been a lot of talk about Jesus. When the festival was half over, Jesus went to the temple and began teaching. (John 7:2, 10-14) As always, he proved himself to be a great Teacher.—Matthew 13:54; Luke 4:22.

⁴ Verse 15 of John chapter 7 says: “Therefore the Jews fell to wondering, saying: ‘How does this man have a knowledge of letters, when he has not studied at the schools?’” Do you understand why they were puzzled? Jesus had not attended any of the rabbinic schools, so he was *uneducated*—or so they thought! Yet, Jesus could locate and read sections in the Sacred Writings with ease. (Luke 4:16-21) Why, this Galilean carpenter even instructed them in the Law of Moses! (John 7:19-23) How was this possible?

⁵ Jesus explained, as we read in verses 16 and 17: “What I teach is not mine, but belongs to him that sent me. If anyone desires to do His will, he will know concerning the teaching whether it is from God or I speak of my own originality.” They wanted to know by whom Jesus was educated, and he told them plainly that his education was from God!—John 12:49; 14:10.

5, 6. (a) How did Jesus explain the source of his teaching? (b) In what way did Jesus use his education?

1. When and how did the process of education have its beginning?

2-4. (a) According to John chapter 7, what were the circumstances surrounding Jesus’ attendance at the Festival of Tabernacles in 32 C.E.? (b) Why were the Jews puzzled about Jesus’ teaching ability?



⁶ How did Jesus use his education? As recorded at John 7:18, Jesus said: “He that speaks of his own originality is seeking his own glory; but he that seeks *the glory of him that sent him*, this one is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him.” How fitting that Jesus used his education to bring glory to Jehovah, “the One perfect in knowledge!”—Job 37:16.

⁷ We thus learn a valuable lesson from Jesus—education should be used, not to glorify ourselves, but *to bring praise to Jehovah*. There is no better way to utilize ed-

7, 8. (a) How should education be used? (b) What are four basic objectives of a balanced education?

**In ancient Israel
education was held in high esteem**

ucation. How, then, can you use education to bring praise to Jehovah?

⁸ To educate means “to train by formal instruction and supervised practice esp[ecially] in a skill, trade, or profession.” Let us now consider four basic objectives of a balanced education and how each of these can be used to praise Jehovah. A balanced education should help us (1) to read well, (2) to write clearly, (3) to develop mentally and morally, and (4) to acquire the practical training needed for day-to-day living.

Learning to Read Well

⁹ Listed first is learning *to read well*. Why is it so important to be a good reader? *The World Book Encyclopedia* explains: "Reading . . . is basic to learning and one of the most important skills in everyday life. . . . Skilled readers contribute to creating a prosperous, productive society. At the same time, they themselves enjoy fuller, more satisfying lives."

¹⁰ If reading in general can help us to enjoy "fuller, more satisfying lives," how much more so is this true of reading God's Word! Such reading opens up our minds and hearts to Jehovah's thoughts and purposes, and a clear understanding of these gives meaning to our lives. In addition, "the word of God is alive and exerts power," says Hebrews 4:12. As we read God's Word and meditate on it, we are drawn to its Author, and we are moved to make changes in our lives to become more pleasing to him. (Galatians 5:22, 23; Ephesians 4:22-24) We are also impelled to share with others the precious truths we read. All of this brings praise to the Great Educator, Jehovah God. Surely there is no better way to use our ability to read!

¹¹ Whether young or old, we are encouraged to learn to read well, for reading plays an important part in our Christian life. In addition to the regular reading of God's Word, a balanced program of personal study would include considering the Bible text from *Examining the Scriptures Daily*, perusing *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, and preparing for Christian meetings. And what about the Christian

ministry? Clearly, preaching publicly, making return visits on interested persons, and conducting home Bible studies all require good reading ability.

Learning to Write Clearly

¹² A second objective is that a balanced education should help us learn *to write clearly*. Not only does writing convey our words and ideas but it also preserves them. Many, many centuries ago, some 40 Jewish men inscribed on papyrus or parchment the words that came to form the inspired Scriptures. (2 Timothy 3:16) Surely this was the greatest writing ever done! Jehovah no doubt guided the copying and re-copying of those sacred words through the centuries, so that they have reached us in reliable form. Are we not thankful that Jehovah committed his words *to writing*, instead of relying on transmission by word of mouth?—Compare Exodus 34:27, 28.

¹³ In ancient times, only certain privileged classes, such as the scribes in Mesopotamia and Egypt, were literate. In sharp contrast with the nations, in Israel *everyone* was encouraged to be literate. The command at Deuteronomy 6:8, 9 for the Israelites to write upon the doorposts of their houses, though apparently figurative, implies that they knew how to write. At an early age, children were taught how to write. The Gezer Calendar, one of the oldest examples of ancient Hebrew writing, is thought by some scholars to be a school-boy's memory exercise.

¹⁴ But how can we in a positive and

12. (a) Why is it important to learn to write clearly? (b) What was the greatest writing ever done?

13. What indicates that the Israelites knew how to write?

14, 15. What are some positive and wholesome ways to use the ability to write?

9. Why is it important to be a good reader?

10. How does reading God's Word help us to enjoy fuller, more satisfying lives?

11. What should be included in a balanced program of personal study?

wholesome way use the ability to write? Certainly by taking notes at Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions. A letter, even if written "in few words," can offer encouragement to one who is ill or can say thank-you to a spiritual brother or sister who was kind or hospitable to us. (1 Peter 5:12) If someone in the congregation has lost a loved one in death, a brief letter or card can "speak consolingly" to that person for us. (1 Thessalonians 5:14) A Christian sister who lost her mother to cancer explained: "One friend wrote me a nice letter. That really helped because I could read it over and over again."

¹⁵ An excellent way of using the ability to write is to bring praise to Jehovah by writing a letter to give a Kingdom witness. Sometimes it may be necessary to keep in contact with newly interested people living in isolated areas. Illness may temporarily make it difficult for you to go from house to house. Perhaps a letter can say in writing what you would normally say in person.

¹⁶ Consider one experience. Many years ago a Witness wrote a letter giving a Kingdom witness to the widow of a man whose death had been announced in the local newspaper. There was no reply. Then, in November 1994, over 21 years later, the Witness received a letter from the woman's daughter. The daughter wrote:

¹⁷ "In April 1973, you wrote to my mother to comfort her after the death of my father. I was nine years old at the time. My mother did study the Bible, but as yet she is not a servant of Jehovah. However, her study eventually led to my association with the truth. In 1988, I started my Bible study—15 years after receiving your let-

16, 17. (a) What experience exemplifies the value of writing a letter to give a Kingdom witness? (b) Can you relate a similar experience?

ter. On March 9, 1990, I was baptized. I am so thankful for your letter of many years ago and so happy to let you know that those seeds you planted did grow, with Jehovah's help. My mother gave me your letter to keep, and I would like to know who you are. I do hope that this letter reaches you." The daughter's letter, which included her address and phone number, did indeed reach the Witness who had written so many years before. Imagine the young woman's surprise when she received a phone call from the Witness—who still writes letters to share the Kingdom hope with others!

Developing Mentally, Morally, and Spiritually

¹⁸ A third objective is that a balanced education should help us to *develop mentally and morally*. In Bible times the mental and moral educating of children was regarded as one of the primary duties of parents. Children not only were taught to read and write but, more important, were educated in God's Law, which involved all their activities of life. Thus, education included instruction about their religious obligations and the principles governing marriage, family relationships, and sexual morality, as well as their obligations toward their fellowman. Such education helped them to develop not just mentally and morally but *spiritually* as well.—Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20, 21; 11:18-21.

¹⁹ What about today? A good secular education is important. It helps us to develop mentally. But where can we turn for education that will show us the best moral

18. In Bible times, how did parents care for the mental and moral education of their children?

19. Where can we find education that shows us the best moral values to live by and that helps us to develop spiritually?

Practical Help for Educators

At the "Joyful Praisers" District Conventions during 1995/96, the Watch Tower Society released a new brochure entitled *Jehovah's Witnesses and Education*. This 32-page, full-color brochure has been published especially for educators. Thus far it has been translated into 58 languages.

Why a brochure for educators? To help them better understand the beliefs of students who are children of Jehovah's Witnesses. What does the brochure contain? In a clear and positive tone, it explains our views on such issues as supplementary education, birthdays and Christmas, and the saluting of the flag. The brochure also re-

assures educators that we want our children to make the most of their schooling and that we are committed to cooperating with educators, taking an active interest in our children's education.

How may the *Education* brochure be used? Since it was prepared for educators, let us share it with teachers, principals, and other school officials. May this new brochure help all such educators to understand our views and beliefs and why we at times claim the right to be different. Parents are encouraged to use the brochure as a basis for personal discussion with their children's educators.

values to live by and that will help us to develop spiritually? Within the Christian congregation, we have access to a program of theocratic education that is not available anywhere else on earth. By means of our personal study of the Bible and Bible-based publications as well as the instruction provided at congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions, we can receive this priceless, ongoing education—divine education—free of charge! What does it teach us?

²⁰ When we begin to study the Bible, we learn basic Scriptural teachings, 'the primary doctrines.' (Hebrews 6:1) As we continue, we take in "solid food"—that is, deeper truths. (Hebrews 5:14) More than

that, though, we learn godly principles that teach us how to live as God wants us to live. For example, we learn to avoid habits and practices that 'defile the flesh' and to have respect for authority and for the person and property of others. (2 Corinthians 7:1; Titus 3:1, 2; Hebrews 13:4) In addition, we come to appreciate the importance of being honest and industrious in our work and the value of living by Bible commands on sexual morality. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Ephesians 4:28) As we make progress in applying these principles in our lives, we grow spiritually, and our relationship with God deepens. Moreover, our godly conduct makes us good citizens, no matter where we live. And this may move others to glorify the Source of divine education—Jehovah God.—1 Peter 2:12.

20. What does divine education teach us, and what results therefrom?

Practical Training for Day-to-Day Living

²¹ A fourth aim of a balanced education is *to provide a person with the practical training needed for day-to-day living*. Parental education in Bible times included practical training. Girls were taught household skills. The last chapter of Proverbs shows that these must have been many and varied. Thus, girls became equipped to do spinning, weaving, and cooking and to care for general household management, trading, and real-estate transactions. Boys were usually taught their father's secular occupation, either agriculture or some trade or craft. Jesus learned carpentry from his adoptive father, Joseph; thus, he was called not only "the carpenter's son" but also "the carpenter."—Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3.

²² Today, too, a well-balanced education includes preparation to care for the needs of a family some day. The apostle Paul's words found at 1 Timothy 5:8 indicate that

21. What practical training did children receive in Bible times?

22, 23. (a) For what should education prepare children? (b) What should be our motive in choosing further education when that may appear necessary?

What Is Your Answer?

- ☐ How did Jesus use his education?
- ☐ Why is it important to learn to read well?
- ☐ How may we use the ability to write to bring praise to Jehovah?
- ☐ How does divine education help us to develop both morally and spiritually?
- ☐ What practical training should a balanced education include?

providing for one's family is a sacred obligation. He wrote: "Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith." Education, then, should prepare children for the responsibilities that they will take on in life as well as equip them to become hard-working members of the community.

²³ How much secular education should we pursue? This may vary from country to country. But if the job market calls for training in addition to the minimum required by law, it is up to parents to guide their children in making a decision about supplementary education or training, weighing both the potential benefits and the drawbacks of such additional studies. What, though, should be one's motive in choosing further education when that may appear necessary? Certainly not riches, self-glory, or praise. (Proverbs 15:25; 1 Timothy 6:17) Remember the lesson we learned from Jesus' example—*education should be used to bring praise to Jehovah*. If we choose further education, our motivation should be the desire to support ourselves adequately so that we can serve Jehovah as fully as possible in the Christian ministry.—Colossians 3:23, 24.

²⁴ Let us, therefore, be diligent in our efforts to acquire a balanced secular education. May we take full advantage of the ongoing program of divine education that is provided within Jehovah's organization. And may we never forget the valuable lesson we learned from Jesus Christ, the best-educated man ever to walk this earth—*education should be used, not to glorify ourselves, but to bring praise to the greatest Educator of all, Jehovah God!*

24. What lesson learned from Jesus ought we never forget?

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

"Shining as Illuminators in the World"

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES stand out as unique and often receive bad publicity because of their not accepting blood transfusions. This position, however, is solidly based on the Bible. It shows that God condemns the misuse of blood, since blood is precious in his eyes. (Genesis 9:3, 4; Leviticus 17:14) As a result of examining the Scriptures on this subject, Jehovah's Witnesses conclude that the Bible's directive to 'abstain from blood' would clearly include the modern practice of transfusing blood.—Acts 15:19, 20, 28, 29.

In recent years members of the medical community, as well as the courts in some countries, have come to support Jehovah's Witnesses on this issue. For example, in Denmark a young mother who was acquainted with the Bible's view of blood died as a result of an automobile accident. Because of her refusal to accept a blood transfusion, her doctors fueled a month-long campaign of hostility by the media against Jehovah's Witnesses.

The young woman's parents requested an inquiry, and in April 1994 a decision was announced by Denmark's Commission of Patients' Complaints. It stated that the patient died, not because she refused blood, but because of medical malpractice. The decision was based on investigations by the Board of Forensic Medicine and the health authorities. In a circular to all health-care facilities in Denmark, the National Board of Health stated that doctors have

an obligation to give Jehovah's Witnesses the best available alternative treatment, taking into consideration their refusal to accept blood.

Another case involved Dan, a 15-year-old Witness who died of leukemia. In this case doctors respected Dan's brave decision to reject a blood transfusion. This resulted in a widespread press campaign in which the media blamed the doctors for Dan's death. Many, however, did not agree with the negative propaganda.

For example, the headmaster at the school that Dan had attended was present at the Kingdom Hall for the funeral. He expressed shock over the unfair news coverage of Dan's death. After approaching a Witness coworker with several questions about Jehovah's Witnesses, he accepted a copy of the video Jehovah's Witnesses—*The Organization Behind the Name*. The video so impressed him that he arranged for all the teachers in the school to view it. Later, the video was shown to all the students, one class at a time.

Denmark's minister of health also disagreed with the bad publicity Dan's doctors received. He stated that the doctors had done the right thing in respecting Dan's mature decision and well-founded faith.

There are millions of Kingdom proclaimers who render obedience to God's laws. Because of their obedience, they stand out, "shining as illuminators in the world."—Philippians 2:12, 15.



GOD'S KINGDOM

—ARE YOU GETTING THE SENSE OF IT?

"As for the one sown upon the fine soil, this is the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it."—MATTHEW 13:23.

HAVE you 'got the sense of' what God's Kingdom is? Concepts of 'the kingdom of the heavens' have differed widely over the centuries. A common belief among some church members today is that the Kingdom is something God puts within a person's heart at conversion. Others feel it is a place where good people go after death to enjoy eternal bliss. Still others claim that God has left it to humans to bring about the Kingdom on earth by their working to instill Christian teachings and practices into social and governmental affairs.

² However, the Bible clearly shows that the Kingdom of God is not an institution on earth. It is neither a condition of heart nor the Christianizing of human society. True, a correct understanding of what this Kingdom is leads to great changes in the lives of those who exercise faith in it. But the Kingdom itself is a divinely instituted heavenly government that brings about God's will, eliminating the effects of sin and death and restoring righteous conditions on earth. Already this Kingdom has taken power in the heavens, and soon "it will crush and put an

end to all these [human] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44; Revelation 11:15; 12:10.

³ Historian H. G. Wells wrote: "This doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, which was the main teaching of Jesus, and which plays so small a part in the Christian creeds, is certainly one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and changed human thought." Right from the start, the theme of Jesus' ministry was: "Repent, you people, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." (Matthew 4:17) He was there on the scene as anointed King, and joy of joys, the way was now being opened up for humans not only to share in the blessings of that Kingdom but also to be corulers and priests with Jesus in that Kingdom!—Luke 22:28-30; Revelation 1:6; 5:10.

⁴ While multitudes heard the thrilling "good news of the kingdom," only a few believed. This was partly because the religious leaders had "shut up the kingdom of the heavens before men." They "took away the key of knowledge" by their false teachings. Because most people rejected Jesus as

3. When Jesus began his ministry, what was opened up for humans?

4. In the first century, how did the multitudes respond to the "good news of the kingdom," leading to what judgment?

1. What are some common beliefs regarding 'the kingdom of the heavens'?

2. How does the Bible explain the Kingdom of God, and what will it accomplish?

the Messiah and the anointed King of God's Kingdom, Jesus said to them: "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits."—Matthew 4:23; 21:43; 23:13; Luke 11:52.

⁵ When teaching a large crowd on one occasion, Jesus, according to his custom, used a series of illustrations to test the crowd and weed out those who had no more than a superficial interest in the Kingdom. The first illustration involved a sower who sowed seed in four types of soil. The first three types were unfavorable for growing plants,

5. How did most of those who heard Jesus' illustrations show they did not hear with understanding?

Jesus' disciples 'got the sense of' the Kingdom and produced good fruit

but the last one was "fine soil" that produced good fruitage. The short illustration ended with the exhortation: "Let him that has ears listen." (Matthew 13:1-9) Most of those present heard him, but they did not "listen." They had no motivation, no real interest in knowing how seed sown under varying conditions was like the Kingdom of the heavens. They went back home to their day-to-day lives, likely thinking that Jesus' illustrations were no more than good stories with moral themes. What richness of understanding and what grand privileges and opportunities they lost out on because their hearts were unresponsive!

⁶ Jesus told his disciples: "To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of

6. Why was understanding of "the sacred secrets of the kingdom" granted only to Jesus' disciples?



the kingdom of the heavens, but to those people it is not granted." Quoting Isaiah, he added: "'For the heart of this people has grown unresponsive, and with their ears they have heard without response, and they have shut their eyes; that they might never see with their eyes and hear with their ears and *get the sense of it with their hearts* and turn back, and I heal them.' However, happy are your eyes because they behold, and your ears because they hear."—Matthew 13:10-16; Mark 4:11-13.

"Getting the Sense of" the Kingdom

⁷ Jesus put his finger on the problem. It had to do with "getting the sense of" the Kingdom message. To his disciples he said privately: "You, then, listen to the illustration of the man that sowed. Where anyone hears the word of the kingdom but *does not get the sense of it*, the wicked one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart." He went on to explain that the four types of soil represented various conditions of the heart into which "the word of the kingdom" would be sown.—Matthew 13:18-23; Luke 8:9-15.

⁸ The "seed" was good in each case, but fruitage would depend upon the condition of the soil. If the soil of the heart was like a busy, packed-down road, hardened by many unspiritual activities, it would be easy for the one hearing the Kingdom message to excuse himself, saying that there was no time for the Kingdom. The neglected seed could easily be snatched away before it could take root. But what if the seed was sown in a heart resembling rocky soil? The seed might sprout, but it would have difficulty sending its roots down to any depth

7. Why is it important to "get the sense of" the Kingdom?

8. What prevented the "seed" sown in the first three types of soil from producing fruitage?

for nourishment and stability. The prospect of being an obedient servant of God, particularly in the heat of persecution, would present an overwhelming challenge, and the individual would stumble. And again, if the soil of the heart was so full of thornlike anxieties or the materialistic desire for riches, the spindly Kingdom plant would be choked. In these three typical situations in life, no Kingdom fruitage would be produced.

⁹ However, what about the Kingdom seed sown in good soil? Jesus answers: "As for the one sown upon the fine soil, this is the one *hearing the word and getting the sense of it*, who really does bear fruit and produces, this one a hundredfold, that one sixty, the other thirty." (Matthew 13:23) In "getting the sense of" the Kingdom, they would produce good fruitage according to their individual circumstances.

Responsibility Comes With Understanding

¹⁰ After giving six further illustrations to explain various aspects of the Kingdom, Jesus asked his disciples: "*Did you get the sense of all these things?*" When they answered "yes," he said: "That being the case, every public instructor, when taught respecting the kingdom of the heavens, is like a man, a householder, who brings out of his treasure store things new and old." The teachings and training provided by Jesus would build his disciples into mature Christians who could bring forth from their 'storehouse' an endless supply of rich spiritual food. Much of this related to God's Kingdom. Jesus made it clear that "getting

9. Why was the seed sown in good soil able to produce good fruit?

10. (a) How did Jesus show that "getting the sense of" the Kingdom brings both blessings and responsibility? (b) Did Jesus' commission to go and make disciples apply only to the first-century disciples?

the sense of" the Kingdom would bring not only blessings but also responsibility. He commanded: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."—Matthew 13:51, 52; 28:19, 20.

¹¹ As promised, Jesus has continued to be with his true disciples down through the centuries until this day. In these last days, he has progressively given them understanding, and he has also held them responsible for the use of the increasing light of truth. (Luke 19:11-15, 26) In 1914, Kingdom events began to unfold quickly and dramatically. In that year, not only did the "birth" of the long-hoped-for Kingdom occur but the "conclusion of the system of things" began. (Revelation 11:15; 12:5, 10; Daniel 7:13, 14, 27) True Christians, discerning the meaning of current events, have conducted the greatest Kingdom-preaching and teaching campaign in history. Jesus foretold this, saying: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matthew 24:14.

¹² This vast Kingdom witness has reached into more than 230 lands. Already, over five million true disciples are sharing in this work, and still others are being gathered. But if we compare the number of disciples with earth's 5.6 billion inhabitants, it is evident that as in Jesus' day, the vast majority of mankind do not "get the sense of" the Kingdom. Many, as predicted, ridicule and say: "Where is this promised presence of

his?" (2 Peter 3:3, 4) The danger for us as Christians is that their complacent, doubting, materialistic attitude could gradually affect how we view our Kingdom privileges. Surrounded by people of this world, we easily can begin to adopt some of their attitudes and practices. How vital it is that we "get the sense of" God's Kingdom and hold fast to it!

Examining Ourselves in Relation to the Kingdom

¹³ Jesus said of the harvest period in which we live: "The Son of man will send forth his angels, and they will collect out from his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness . . . At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let him that has ears listen." (Matthew 13:41, 43) Are you continuing to 'hear' with obedient responsiveness the command to preach the Kingdom and make disciples? Remember, "the one sown upon the fine soil" 'heard the word and got the sense of it' and produced good fruitage.—Matthew 13:23.

¹⁴ When doing personal study and attending Christian meetings, we have to 'incline our hearts to discernment.' (Proverbs 2:1-4) When counsel is given regarding conduct, dress, music, and entertainment, we must allow it to sink into our hearts and move us to make any adjustments needed. Never rationalize, make excuses, or otherwise fail to respond. If the Kingdom is real in our lives, we will live by its standards and zealously proclaim it to others. Jesus said: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter

11. When 1914 arrived, what events related to the Kingdom took place?

12. (a) What has been the result of the extensive modern-day Kingdom witness? (b) In this doubting world, what danger is there for Christians?

13. As to the commission to preach the Kingdom good news, how can we test whether we are continuing to 'hear' with discernment?

14. When instruction is given, how do we show that we "get the sense of" the counsel given?

into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will.”—Matthew 7:21-23.

¹⁵ The human tendency is to be anxious about needed food, clothing, and shelter, but Jesus said: “Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his [God’s] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33, 34) In setting priorities, put the Kingdom first in your life. Keep your life simple, being satisfied with necessities. It would be folly to fill our lives with unessential activities and acquisitions, perhaps rationalizing that doing this is acceptable, since these things are not necessarily bad in themselves. While that may be true, what would the acquiring and using of such nonessentials do to our scheduling personal study, attending Christian meetings, and engaging in the preaching work? Jesus said that the Kingdom is like a merchant who found one “pearl of high value [and] away he went and promptly sold all the things he had and bought it.” (Matthew 13:45, 46) This

15. Why is it important to ‘seek first the kingdom and God’s righteousness’?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What is the Kingdom of God?
- ☐ Why did most of Jesus’ hearers not “get the sense of” the Kingdom?
- ☐ How does “getting the sense of” the Kingdom bring both blessings and responsibility?
- ☐ As to preaching, what indicates whether we have ‘got the sense of’ the Kingdom?
- ☐ How do we show by our conduct that we have ‘got the sense of’ counsel given?

is how we should feel about God’s Kingdom. We should imitate Paul not Demas, who forsook the ministry “because he loved the present system of things.”—2 Timothy 4:10, 18; Matthew 19:23, 24; Philippians 3:7, 8, 13, 14; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10, 17-19.

“Unrighteous Persons Will Not Inherit God’s Kingdom”

¹⁶ When the Corinthian congregation was tolerating immorality, Paul frankly said: “What! Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God’s kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God’s kingdom.” (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) If we “get the sense of” God’s Kingdom, we will not deceive ourselves by thinking that Jehovah will tolerate some form of immorality as long as he sees us busy in Christian service. Uncleaness should not even be mentioned among us. (Ephesians 5:3-5) Do you detect that some of this world’s foul thinking or practices are beginning to creep into your life? Cut them out of your life immediately! The Kingdom is far too precious to lose for the sake of such things.—Mark 9:47.

¹⁷ Jesus’ disciples asked: “Who really is greatest in the kingdom of the heavens?” Jesus answered by setting a young child in their midst and saying: “Truly I say to you, Unless you turn around and become as young children, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Therefore, whoever will humble himself like this

16. How will “getting the sense of” God’s Kingdom help us avoid wrong conduct?

17. In what ways will appreciation for God’s Kingdom promote humility and take away causes for stumbling?

young child is the one that is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens.” (Matthew 18:1-6) The proud, the demanding, the uncaring, and the lawless will not be in God’s Kingdom, nor will they be subjects of the Kingdom. Does your love for your brothers, your humility, your godly fear, move you to avoid stumbling others by your conduct? Or do you insist on your “rights” no matter how this attitude and conduct may affect others? —Romans 14:13, 17.

¹⁸ Our heavenly Father, Jehovah, will soon answer fully the fervent prayer: “Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.” Very soon the ruling King, Jesus Christ, will come in the sense of sitting down on his throne for judgment, to separate the “sheep” from the “goats.” At that appointed

18. What will result to obedient mankind when God’s Kingdom causes His will to take place “as in heaven, also upon earth”?

time, “the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.’” The goats “will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.” (Matthew 6:10; 25:31-34, 46) “The great tribulation” will clear away the old system and all who refuse to “get the sense of” the Kingdom. But the millions of “great tribulation” survivors and the billions who will be resurrected will inherit Kingdom blessings without end in the restored earthly Paradise. (Revelation 7:14) The Kingdom is earth’s new government, ruling from the heavens. It will carry out to completion Jehovah’s purpose for the earth and mankind, all to the sanctification of his most holy name. Is that not an inheritance well worth working for, sacrificing for, and waiting for? This is what “getting the sense of” the Kingdom should mean for us!

TRUST IN JEHOVAH AND HIS WORD

“Those knowing your name will trust in you.”—PSALM 9:10.

IN THIS modern world, the invitation to trust in God and his Word, the Bible, may seem impractical and unrealistic. Yet, God’s wisdom has stood the test of time. The Creator of man and woman is the Originator of marriage and the family, and he knows our needs better than anyone else

1. Why can we still have confidence in Jehovah and his Word in our modern day?

does. Just as basic human needs have not changed, so the fundamental ways of meeting those needs have remained the same. The Bible’s wise counsel, though written down centuries ago, still provides the best guidance for success in living and in solving problems. Heeding it results in a good measure of happiness—even in the sophisticated, scientific world in which we live!

² Trusting in Jehovah and applying the Bible's principles bring practical benefits every day. Proof of this lies in the lives of the millions of Jehovah's Witnesses around the world who have had the conviction and courage to apply the Bible's counsel. For them, trust in the Creator and his Word has proved to be well placed. (Psalm 9:9, 10) Obeying God's commandments has made them better people when it comes to cleanliness, honesty, industriousness, respect for the life and possessions of others, and moderation in food and drink. It has led to proper love and training within the family circle—being hospitable, patient, merciful, and forgiving—as well as to a host of other things. They have been largely able to avoid the bad fruitage of anger, hatred, murder, envy, fear, laziness, pride, lying, slander, promiscuousness, and immorality. (Psalm 32:10) But God does more than promise a good outcome for those keeping his laws. Jesus said that those who follow the Christian way would receive “a hundredfold now in this period of time, . . . mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in the coming system of things everlasting life.”—Mark 10:29, 30.

Avoid Trusting in Worldly Wisdom

³ A problem for imperfect humans is that they tend to minimize or forget what God requires. They easily begin to think that they know best or that wisdom from the intelligentsia of this world is superior to God's, that it is more up-to-date. Servants of God can also develop this attitude, living

2. (a) What good fruitage has obeying God's commandments produced in the lives of Jehovah's people? (b) What more does Jehovah promise for those who are obedient to him and his Word?

3. In continuing to put trust in Jehovah and his Word, with what problems are Christians sometimes faced?

as they do in the midst of this world. Thus, in extending the loving invitation to listen to his counsel, our heavenly Father also includes appropriate warnings: “My son, my law do not forget, and my commandments may your heart observe, because length of days and years of life and peace will be added to you. Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight. Do not become wise in your own eyes. Fear Jehovah and turn away from bad.”—Proverbs 3:1, 2, 5-7.

⁴ The wisdom of this world is available in abundance and from many sources. There are many institutions of learning, and “to the making of many books there is no end.” (Ecclesiastes 12:12) Now the so-called information superhighway of the computer world promises to provide unlimited data on almost any subject. But having all this knowledge available does not make the world smarter or solve its problems. Rather, the world situation gets worse every day. Understandably, the Bible tells us that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”—1 Corinthians 3:19, 20.

⁵ During this final part of the last days, it is only to be expected that the arch-deceiver, Satan the Devil, would launch an avalanche of lies in an effort to undermine confidence in the Bible's truthfulness. Higher critics have produced a proliferation of speculative books that challenge the authenticity and reliability of the Bible. Paul warned his fellow Christian: “O Timothy, guard what is laid up in trust with you, turning away from the empty speeches that violate what is holy and from the

4. How pervasive is “the wisdom of this world,” and why is it “foolishness with God”?

5. What warnings does the Bible give as to “the wisdom of this world”?



Christians turn to Jehovah and his Word while rejecting as foolish "the wisdom of this world"

contradictions of the falsely called 'knowledge.' For making a show of such knowledge some have deviated from the faith." (1 Timothy 6:20, 21) The Bible further warns: "Look out: perhaps there may be someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ."—Colossians 2:8.

Fight the Tendency to Doubt

⁶ Another sly tactic of the Devil is the sowing of doubts in the mind. He is ever alert to see some weakness in faith and exploit it. Any who experience doubts should remember that the one behind such doubts is the one who said to Eve:

6. Why is vigilance necessary to prevent doubts from taking root in the heart?

"Is it really so that God said you must not eat from every tree of the garden?" Once the Tempter had planted doubt in her mind, the next step was to tell her a lie, which she believed. (Genesis 3:1, 4, 5) To avoid having our faith destroyed by doubt as Eve's was, we need to be vigilant. If some tinge of doubt about Jehovah, his Word, or his organization has begun to linger in your heart, take quick steps to eliminate it before it festers into something that could destroy your faith.—Compare 1 Corinthians 10:12.

⁷ What can be done? Again, the answer is to trust in Jehovah and his Word. "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. But let him keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about." (James 1:5, 6; 2 Peter 3:17, 18) So earnest prayer to Jehovah is the first step. (Psalm 62:8) Then, do not hesitate to ask for help from loving overseers in the congregation. (Acts 20:28; James 5:14, 15; Jude 22) They will help you trace the source of your doubts, which may be due to pride or some wrong thinking.

⁸ Has the reading or listening to apostate ideas or worldly philosophy introduced poisonous doubts? Wisely, the Bible counsels: "Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of

7. What can be done to eradicate doubts?

8. How does apostate thinking often get started, and what is the remedy?

the truth aright. But shun empty speeches that violate what is holy; for they will advance to more and more ungodliness, and their word will spread like gangrene.” (2 Timothy 2:15-17) It is of interest that many who have become victims of apostasy got started in the wrong direction by first complaining about how they felt they were being treated in Jehovah’s organization. (Jude 16) Finding fault with beliefs came later. Just as a surgeon acts quickly to cut out gangrene, act quickly to rout out of the mind any tendency to complain, to be dissatisfied with the way things are done in the Christian congregation. (Colossians 3:13, 14) Cut off anything that feeds such doubts.—Mark 9:43.

⁹ Stick closely to Jehovah and his organization. Loyally imitate Peter, who resolutely stated: “Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life.” (John 6:52, 60, 66-68) Have a good program of study of Jehovah’s Word so as to keep your faith strong, like a large shield, able “to quench all the wicked one’s burning missiles.” (Ephesians 6:16) Keep active in the Christian ministry, lovingly sharing the Kingdom message with others. Every day, meditate appreciatively on how Jehovah has blessed you. Be thankful that you have a knowledge of the truth. Doing all these things in a good Christian routine will help you to be happy, to endure, and to remain free of doubts.—Psalm 40:4; Philipians 3:15, 16; Hebrews 6:10-12.

Following Jehovah’s Direction in Marriage

¹⁰ In arranging for man and woman to live together as a married couple, Jehovah

9. How will a good theocratic routine help us keep healthy in the faith?

10. Why is it especially important to look to Jehovah for guidance in Christian marriage?

purposed not only to fill the earth comfortably but also to enhance their happiness. However, sin and imperfection have brought serious problems into the marriage relationship. Christians are not exempt from these, since they too are imperfect and experience the pressures of modern-day living. Still, to the extent that they trust in Jehovah and his Word, Christians can have good success in marriage and in raising their children. There is no place in Christian marriage for worldly practices and behavior. God’s Word admonishes us: “Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.”—Hebrews 13:4.

¹¹ Marriage that is fulfilled according to the Bible’s counsel has a climate of love, commitment, and security. Both husband and wife understand and respect the principle of headship. When difficulties develop, often they are due to some neglect in applying the Bible’s counsel. In solving a lingering problem, it is vital that both mates focus honestly on what the problem really is and deal with causes rather than symptoms. If recent discussions have led to little or no agreement, the couple may ask for impartial help from a loving overseer.

¹² Does the problem involve communication, respect for each other’s feelings, respect for headship, or how decisions are made? Does it have to do with the raising of children, or the balancing out of sexual needs? Or is it the family budget, recreation, association, whether the wife should be employed, or where you are to live?

11. In solving marital problems, what should be recognized by both mates?

12. (a) On what common problems in marriage does the Bible provide counsel? (b) Why is there a need on the part of both mates to do things Jehovah’s way?



Whatever the problem, the Bible gives practical advice either directly by means of laws or indirectly by means of principles. (Matthew 19:4, 5, 9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-40; Ephesians 5:21-23, 28-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; Titus 2:4, 5; 1 Peter 3:1-7) When both mates refrain from making selfish demands and let love have its full expression in their marriage, greater happiness results. There has to be an overwhelming desire on the part of both marriage mates to make needed changes, to do things Jehovah's way. "He that is showing insight in a matter will find good, and happy is he that is trusting in Jehovah."—Proverbs 16:20.

Youths—Listen to God's Word

¹³ It is not easy for Christian youths to grow up strong in the faith when the wicked world is all around them. One reason is that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one," Satan the Devil. (1 John 5:19) Youths are under attack by this vicious enemy who can make the bad look

13. Why is it not easy for Christian youths to grow up with strong faith in Jehovah and his Word?

Families that trust in Jehovah and his Word have good success and happiness

good. The me-first attitudes, the selfish ambitions, the cravings for what is immoral and cruel, and the abnormal pursuit of pleasures—all of these come together into one common, dominant pattern of thinking described in the Bible as "the spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:1-3) Satan has craftily promoted this "spirit" in school textbooks, in much of the available music, in sports, and in other forms of entertainment. Parents need to be alert to offset such influences by helping their children grow up trusting in Jehovah and his Word.

¹⁴ Paul gave fatherly advice to his young associate Timothy: "Flee from the desires incidental to youth, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, along with those who call upon the Lord out of a clean heart." (2 Timothy 2:22) While not all "desires incidental to youth" are bad in

14. How can young ones "flee from the desires incidental to youth"?

themselves, youths should “flee from” them in that they should not let these things be a preoccupation, leaving little, if any, time for godly pursuits. Bodybuilding, sports, music, entertainment, hobbies, and travel, while not necessarily wrong, can be a snare if they become the big things in life. Flee completely from aimless conversation, from hanging out, from abnormal interest in sex, from just sitting around and being bored, and from complaining about not being understood by your parents.

¹⁵ Even in the privacy of the home, danger may lurk for youths. If immoral or violent TV shows and videos are watched, the desire to do bad things could be implanted. (James 1:14, 15) The Bible counsels: “O you lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad.” (Psalm 97:10; 115:11) Jehovah knows if anyone is attempting to live a double life. (Proverbs 15:3) Christian youths, look around your room. Do you display wall posters of immoral stars of the sports or music world, or do you display wholesome things that are good reminders? (Psalm 101:3) In your clos-

15. What things can happen in the privacy of the home that can contribute to youths’ leading a double life?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Why should Christians not put their trust in “the wisdom of this world”?
- ☐ What should be done if one is experiencing doubts?
- ☐ How does doing things Jehovah’s way bring success and happiness in marriage?
- ☐ How does the Bible help youths to “flee from the desires incidental to youth”?

et, do you have modest clothing, or do some of your garments reflect the extreme clothing styles of this world? In subtle ways the Devil can ensnare you if you give in to the temptation to sample what is bad. The Bible wisely counsels: “Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.”—1 Peter 5:8.

¹⁶ The Bible tells you to watch your association. (1 Corinthians 15:33) Your companions should be those who fear Jehovah. Do not give in to peer pressure. (Psalm 56:11; Proverbs 29:25) Be obedient to your God-fearing parents. (Proverbs 6:20-22; Ephesians 6:1-3) Look to the elders for direction and encouragement. (Isaiah 32:1, 2) Keep your mind and eyes on spiritual values and goals. Look for opportunities to make spiritual advancement and to participate in congregation activities. Learn how to do things with your hands. Grow up strong and healthy in the faith, and then you will prove that you really are *somebody*—somebody worthy of life in Jehovah’s new world! Our heavenly Father will be proud of you, your earthly parents will delight in you, and your Christian brothers and sisters will be encouraged by you. That is what counts!—Proverbs 4:1, 2, 7, 8.

¹⁷ In poetic phrase the psalmist was inspired to write: “Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness. O Jehovah of armies, happy is the man that is trusting in you.” (Psalm 84:11, 12) Yes, happiness and success, not disappointment and failure, are what will come to all of those who trust in Jehovah and his Word, the Bible.—2 Timothy 3:14, 16, 17.

16. How can the Bible’s counsel help a youth make everyone who counts be proud of him?

17. What benefits come to those who trust in Jehovah and his Word?

MY LIFELONG HOPE —NEVER TO DIE

AS TOLD BY HECTOR R. PRIEST

“The cancer is incurable,” the doctor said.
“There is nothing more we can do for you.” That diagnosis was made over ten years ago. Yet I still entertain the Bible-based hope of living forever on earth without ever dying.—John 11:26.

MY PARENTS were sincere Methodists who regularly attended church in a small country town, not far from our family farm. I was born in the lovely farming valley of the Wairarapa, about 80 miles northeast of Wellington, New Zealand. There we enjoyed a view of snowcapped mountains, clear mountain rivers, rolling hills, and fertile plains.

In the Methodist Church, we were taught that all good people go to heaven but that the bad go to hell, a place of fiery torment. I could not understand why if God had wanted humans to live in heaven, he did not put them there to begin with. I had always feared death and often wondered why we have to die. In 1927, when I was 16 years old, our family suffered a tragedy. That is what led me on a quest for answers to my questions.

Why Did Reg Die?

When my brother Reg was 11 years old, he became seriously ill. The doctor could not determine what was wrong and was unable to help him. Mother called the Methodist minister. He prayed over Reg, but

this failed to comfort Mother. In fact, she told the minister that his prayers were ineffectual.

When Reg died, Mother would talk to anyone and everyone to try to satisfy her thirst for truthful answers regarding why her young son had to die. While talking to a businessman in town, she asked if he knew anything about the condition of the dead. He had no idea, but he said: “Someone left a book here that you are welcome to have.”

Mother took the book home and began to read it. She could not put it down. Gradually her whole disposition changed. She told the family, “This is it; this is the truth.” The book was *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, the first volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*. I was skeptical at first and tried to argue against the book’s presentation of the Creator’s purpose. Eventually my arguments dried up.

Embracing Bible Truth

I thought, ‘Imagine living forever, never having to die!’ Such a hope is what one would expect of a loving God. A paradise earth! Yes, this was for me.

After learning these wonderful truths, Mother and three Christian sisters from Wellington—Sisters Thompson, Barton, and Jones—would be away for days at a time, spreading Kingdom seed far and wide in country places. Although Father did not have Mother's missionary spirit, he supported her in her activity.

I was convinced of the truth, but for a time I did little about my beliefs. In 1935, I married Rowena Corlett, and in time we were blessed with a daughter, Enid, and a son, Barry. I worked as a stock buyer, purchasing thousands of head of livestock from surrounding farmers. When these



My mother



**With my wife
and children**

farmers would discuss politics, I would feel good when I told them: "None of these efforts of men will succeed. God's Kingdom is the only government that will work."

Sadly, I became addicted to tobacco; I constantly had a cigar in my mouth. In time my health deteriorated, and I was hospitalized with painful stomach problems. I was told that I had acute gastroenteritis, caused by my smoking. Although I quit the habit, it was not uncommon for me to dream that I was smoking an everlasting cigar or cigarette. What a terrible addiction tobacco can be!

After quitting tobacco, I made other important adjustments. In 1939, when I was 28, I was baptized in the Mangatai River near our home in the country. Robert Lazenby, who later had oversight of the preaching work in New Zealand, traveled all the way from Wellington to give the talk in our home and baptize me. From that time on, I became a bold Witness of Jehovah.

Organizing the Preaching Work

Following my baptism I was appointed overseer of the Eketahuna Congregation. My wife, Rowena, had not yet embraced Bible truth. However, I let her know that I was going to invite Alf Bryant to come down from Pahiatua to show me how to witness properly from house to house. I wanted to organize the preaching work and cover our territory systematically.

Rowena said: "Hector, if you go witnessing from house to house, I will not be here when you get back. I'm leaving you. Your responsibility is here—at home with your family."

I did not know what to do. Hesitantly, I got dressed. 'I've got to do it,' I kept thinking to myself. 'My life depends on it, and

so do the lives of my family.' So I assured Rowena that I did not want to hurt her in any way. I told her I loved her dearly, but because Jehovah's name and sovereignty, as well as our own lives, were involved, I just had to preach in this way.

Alf and I went to the first door, and he took the lead in speaking. But then I found myself taking over the conversation, telling the householder that what happened in Noah's day is a parallel of what is happening in our day and that we have to do something about making sure of our salvation. (Matthew 24:37-39) I left some booklets there.

Upon our leaving, Alf said: "Where did you get all that knowledge? You do not need me. You go on your own, and we will cover twice the territory." So that's what we did.

As we made our way home, I did not know what would await us. To my surprise and joy, Rowena had a cup of tea ready for us. A fortnight later my wife joined me in the public ministry and became a fine example of Christian zeal.

Among the first ones to become Jehovah's Witnesses in our farming valley were Maud Manser, her son William, and her daughter Ruby. Maud's husband was an abrasive man with a rough exterior. One day Rowena and I arrived at their farm to take Maud out in the ministry. Young William had arranged for us to use his car, but his father had other ideas.

The situation was tense. I asked Rowena to hold our baby daughter, Enid. I climbed into William's car and roared out of the garage while Mr. Manser hurried to try to shut the garage door before we could get out. But he failed. After going up the drive a way, we stopped, and I got out of the car to meet an infuriated Mr. Manser. I told him: "We are going into the field

ministry, and Mrs. Manser is coming with us." I appealed to him, and his anger subsided somewhat. Looking back, I probably should have handled it differently, but later he became more favorable toward Jehovah's Witnesses, although he never became a Witness.

There were only a few of Jehovah's people in those years, and we truly enjoyed and benefited from the visits of full-time ministers who stayed with us on our farm. These visitors included Adrian Thompson and his sister Molly, both of whom attended early classes of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead for missionaries and served in foreign assignments in Japan and Pakistan.

Wartime Experiences

In September 1939, World War II began, and in October 1940, the New Zealand government banned the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses. Many of our Christian brothers were haled before the courts of the land. Some were put into work camps and isolated from their wives and children. As the war raged on, even though we had a dairy farm, I wondered if I would be called up for military service. Then the announcement was made that no more farmers would be taken off the land for military service.

Rowena and I continued on in our Christian ministry, each of us devoting over 60 hours a month to the preaching work. During this time, I had the privilege of helping young Witnesses who were maintaining their Christian neutrality. I appeared on their behalf before the courts of Wellington, Palmerston North, Pahiatua, and Masterton. Usually there was a member of the clergy on the draft board, and it was a delight to expose their unchristian support of the war effort.—1 John 3:10-12.

One night while Rowena and I were studying *The Watchtower*, we were raided by detectives. A search turned up Bible literature in our home. "You can go to jail for this," we were informed. When the detectives got into their car to leave, they discovered that the brakes had locked and the car would not move. William Manser helped fix the car, and we never heard from the men again.

During the ban, we would hide Bible literature in a building on a remote part of our farm. In the middle of the night, I would visit the New Zealand branch office and load up my car with the literature. Then I would bring it home and store it in our isolated place. One night as I arrived at the branch to pick up a secret shipment, the whole place suddenly lit up! The police yelled: "We caught you!" Surprisingly, though, they let me go without too much fuss.

In 1949, Rowena and I sold the farm and decided to pioneer until our money ran out. We moved to a house in Masterton and pioneered with the Masterton Congregation. Within two years the Featherston Congregation was established with 24 active publishers, and I served as the presiding overseer. Then, in 1953, I enjoyed the privilege of traveling to the United States to attend the eight-day international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses at Yankee Stadium in New York City. Rowena was unable to accompany me because she needed to care for our daughter, Enid, who suffered from cerebral palsy.

After I returned to New Zealand, I had to take up secular work. We moved back to the Masterton Congregation, where I was appointed presiding overseer. About this time William Manser purchased the Little Theater in Masterton, and this became

the first Kingdom Hall in the Wairarapa. During the 1950's, our congregation enjoyed fine spiritual and numerical growth. Therefore, when the circuit overseer visited, he would often encourage mature ones to move to other parts of the country to help out with the preaching work there, and a number did so.

Our family remained in Masterton, and during the following decades, I not only had many privileges in the congregation but enjoyed assignments at both national and international conventions. Rowena zealously shared in the field service, constantly assisting others to do the same.

Enduring Tests of Faith

As noted at the outset, in 1985, I was diagnosed as having incurable cancer. How much my faithful wife, Rowena, and I, together with our children, wanted to be among the millions now living who will never die! But the doctors sent me home to die. First, though, they asked me how I viewed the diagnosis.

"I am going to keep a calm heart and be optimistic," I replied. Indeed, the Bible proverb became my stabilizer: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism." —Proverbs 14:30.

The cancer specialists praised that Bible advice. "That mental outlook is 90 percent of the cure in cancer patients," they said. They also recommended seven weeks of radiation treatment. Happily, I was eventually successful in combating the cancer.

During this very difficult time, I was struck a terrible blow. My beautiful, loyal wife suffered a brain hemorrhage and died. I found comfort in the examples of faithful ones recorded in the Scriptures and in how Jehovah worked things out for them as they maintained their integrity. Thus, my

hope in the new world remained bright. —Romans 15:4.

Nevertheless, I became depressed and wanted to stop serving as an elder. The local brothers encouraged me until I again had the power to carry on. As a result, I have been able to serve continuously as a Christian elder and overseer for the past 57 years.

Facing the Future With Confidence

Serving Jehovah all these years has been an inestimable privilege. How many blessings I have had! It does not seem long ago that, as a 16-year-old, I heard my mother exclaim: "This is it; this is the truth!" My mother remained a faithful, zealous Witness right up to the time of her death in 1979, when she was over 100 years of age. Her daughter and six sons also became loyal Witnesses.

My burning desire is to live to see Jehovah's name cleared of all reproach. Will I realize my lifelong hope of never dying? That, of course, remains to be seen. However, I am confident that many, yes, millions will eventually experience that blessing. So as long as I continue to live, I will treasure the prospect of being counted among those who will never die.—John 11:26.

In Our Next Issue

**The Permanent End of Violence
—How?**

Joyful Now and Forever

Look Beyond the Things You See!

Irina's favorite songbook

NOT long ago, Irina, a nine-year-old girl from Sofia, Bulgaria, was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She loves to sing and particularly enjoys the songs in the book *Sing Praises to Jehovah*. Irina therefore made it a goal to learn a few songs by heart every month.

One of Irina's favorite subjects in school is music. So her music teacher was perplexed when Irina turned down an offer to sing in the school choir. Why did Irina refuse? She realized that much of the music she would be required to sing glorifies national heroes and holidays that are of pagan origin. Some songs even advocate rebellion and violence to promote national ideals. The teacher could not understand Irina's position on this matter. Irina resorted to writing her teacher a letter setting forth her religious convictions—but to no avail.



Irina's father had an idea. He gave the teacher a copy of the book *Sing Praises to Jehovah*, containing the songs that Irina loves to sing. A few days later, the teacher called Irina into the music room. She asked Irina to sing some of her favorite songs from the book—in the presence of her classmates—while the teacher accompanied her on the piano. The performance lasted for over an hour! The teacher had to admit that Irina's favorite songbook had some beautiful melodies.