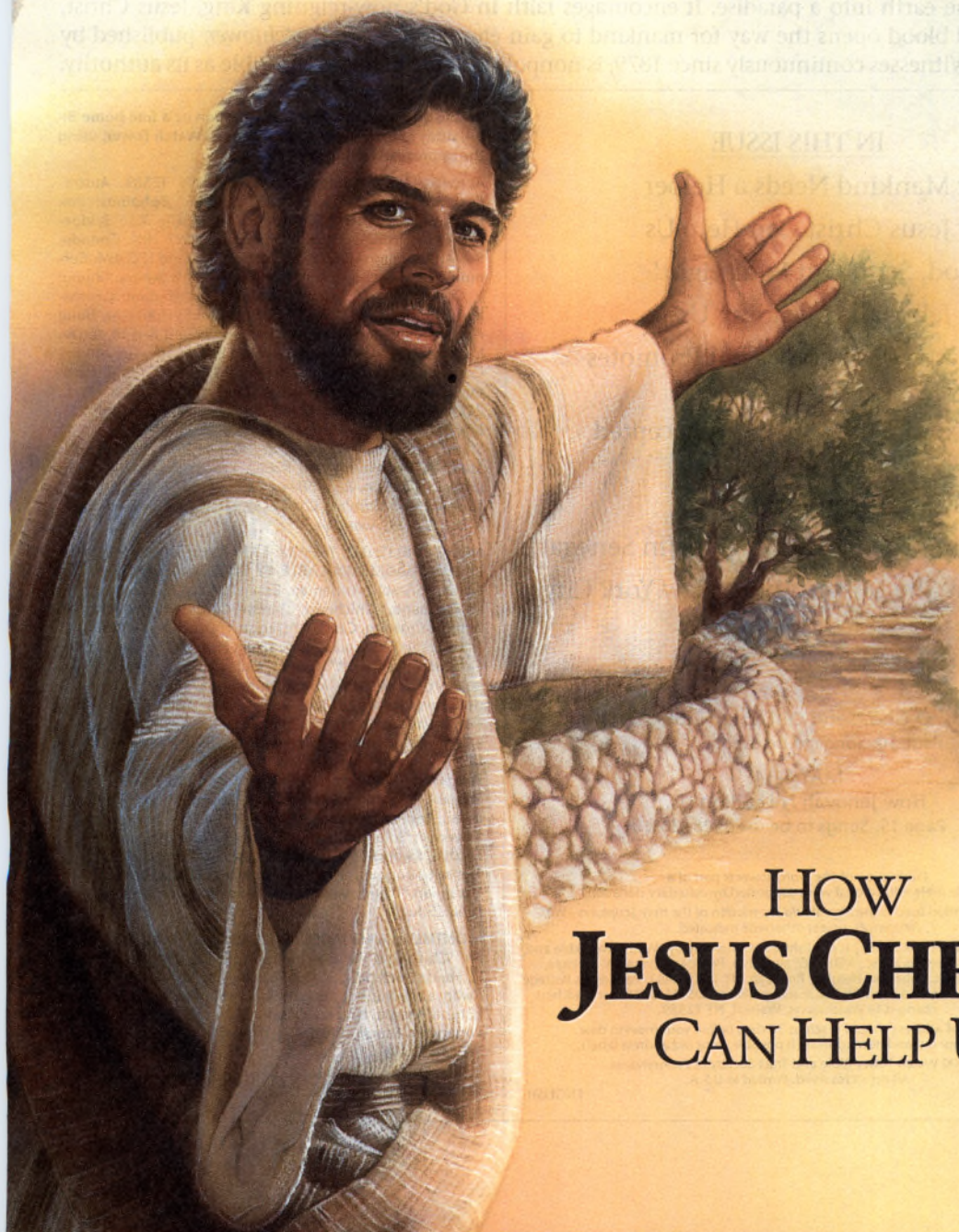


THE WATCHTOWER

MARCH 15, 2000

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



HOW
JESUS CHRIST
CAN HELP US

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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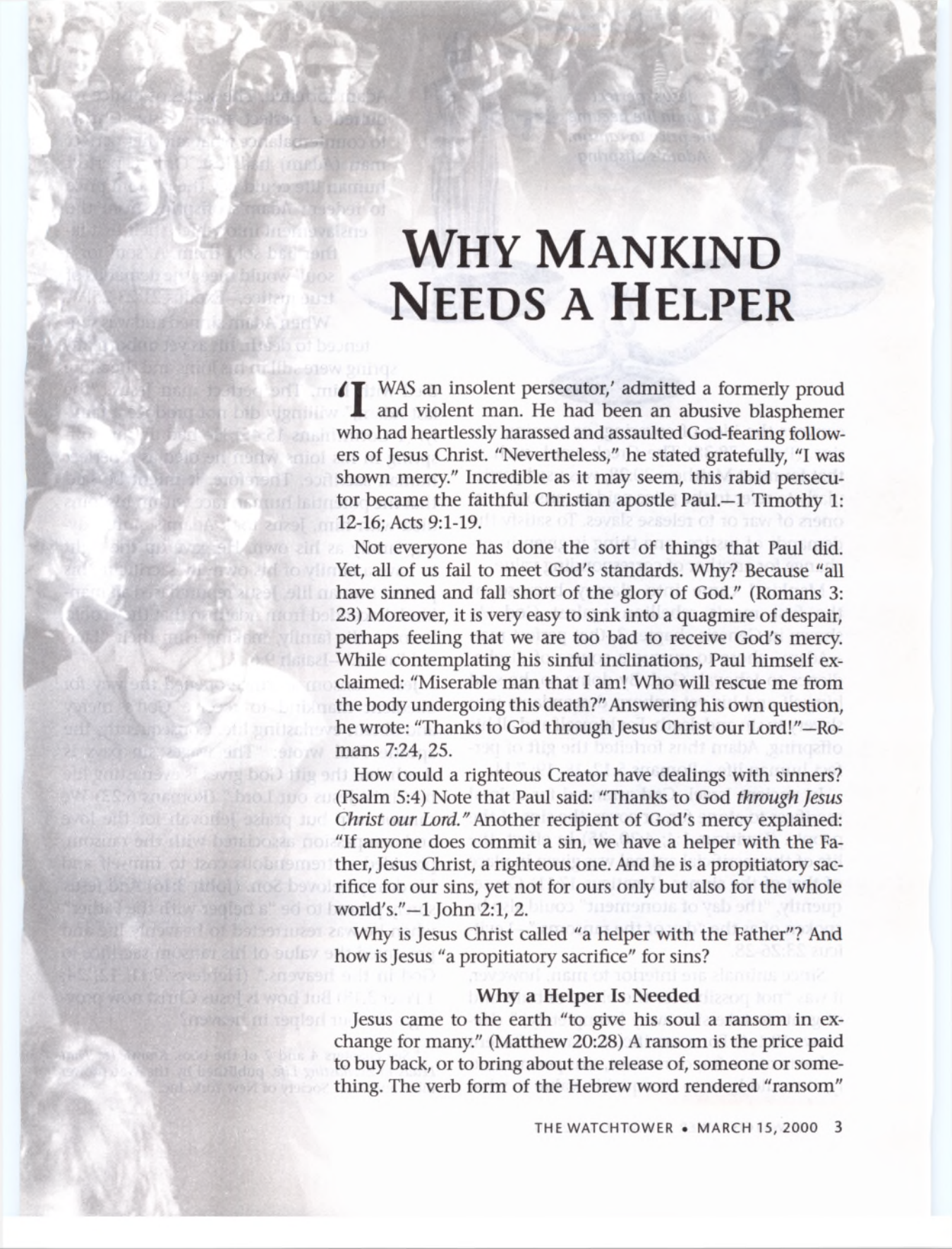
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WHY MANKIND NEEDS A HELPER

I WAS an insolent persecutor,' admitted a formerly proud and violent man. He had been an abusive blasphemer who had heartlessly harassed and assaulted God-fearing followers of Jesus Christ. "Nevertheless," he stated gratefully, "I was shown mercy." Incredible as it may seem, this rabid persecutor became the faithful Christian apostle Paul.—1 Timothy 1:12-16; Acts 9:1-19.

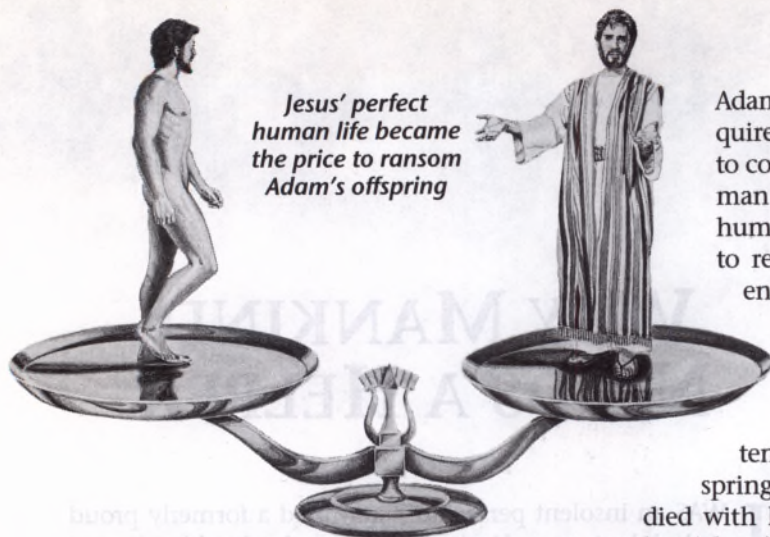
Not everyone has done the sort of things that Paul did. Yet, all of us fail to meet God's standards. Why? Because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Moreover, it is very easy to sink into a quagmire of despair, perhaps feeling that we are too bad to receive God's mercy. While contemplating his sinful inclinations, Paul himself exclaimed: "Miserable man that I am! Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death?" Answering his own question, he wrote: "Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"—Romans 7:24, 25.

How could a righteous Creator have dealings with sinners? (Psalm 5:4) Note that Paul said: "Thanks to God *through Jesus Christ our Lord*." Another recipient of God's mercy explained: "If anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one. And he is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's."—1 John 2:1, 2.

Why is Jesus Christ called "a helper with the Father"? And how is Jesus "a propitiatory sacrifice" for sins?

Why a Helper Is Needed

Jesus came to the earth "to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28) A ransom is the price paid to buy back, or to bring about the release of, someone or something. The verb form of the Hebrew word rendered "ransom"



Jesus' perfect human life became the price to ransom Adam's offspring

conveys the idea of covering, or atoning, for sins. (Psalm 78:38) The Greek word, such as that found at Matthew 20:28, was used particularly to refer to the price paid to ransom prisoners of war or to release slaves. To satisfy the demands of justice, one thing is given in exchange for another of corresponding value.

Mankind came into slavery because of the first man's rebellion against God. As shown in Genesis chapter 3, that perfect man—Adam—chose to pursue a course of disobedience to Jehovah God. By doing so, he sold himself and his yet unborn descendants into slavery to sin and death. For himself and all his offspring, Adam thus forfeited the gift of perfect human life.—Romans 5:12, 18, 19; 7:14.

In ancient Israel, God arranged for animal sacrifices to atone for, or cover, the sins of the people. (Leviticus 1:4; 4:20, 35) In effect, the life of the sacrificial animal was given in place of that of the sinner. (Leviticus 17:11) Consequently, "the day of atonement" could also be spoken of as the "day of the ransoms."—Leviticus 23:26-28.

Since animals are inferior to man, however, it was "not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take sins away [completely]." (Hebrews 10:1-4) For a sacrifice to have sufficient value to atone for, or remove, sins permanently, it would have to be equal in value to what

Adam forfeited. The scales of justice required a perfect man (Jesus Christ) to counterbalance what another perfect man (Adam) had lost. Only a perfect human life could pay the ransom price to redeem Adam's offspring from the enslavement into which their first father had sold them. A 'soul for a soul' would meet the demands of true justice.—Exodus 21:23-25.

When Adam sinned and was sentenced to death, his as yet unborn offspring were still in his loins and therefore died with him. The perfect man Jesus, "the last Adam," willingly did not produce a family. (1 Corinthians 15:45) He had unborn offspring in his loins when he died as a perfect human sacrifice. Therefore, it might be said that the potential human race within his loins died with him. Jesus took Adam's sinful, dying family as his own. He gave up the right to have a family of his own. By sacrificing his perfect human life, Jesus repurchased all mankind descended from Adam so that they could become His family, making Him their "Eternal Father."—Isaiah 9:6, 7.

Jesus' ransom sacrifice opened the way for obedient mankind to receive God's mercy and obtain everlasting life. Consequently, the apostle Paul wrote: "The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23) We cannot help but praise Jehovah for the love and compassion associated with the ransom, provided at tremendous cost to himself and his dearly beloved Son. (John 3:16) And Jesus surely proved to be "a helper with the Father" when he was resurrected to heavenly life and presented the value of his ransom sacrifice to God in the heavens.* (Hebrews 9:11, 12, 24; 1 Peter 3:18) But how is Jesus Christ now proving to be our helper in heaven?

* See chapters 4 and 7 of the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



HOW JESUS CHRIST CAN HELP US

WHAT Jesus Christ did to help people when he was on earth was marvelous. This was so true that after recounting numerous events of Jesus' life, one eyewitness said: "There are, in fact, many other things also which Jesus did, which, if ever they were written in full detail, I suppose, the world itself could not contain the scrolls written." (John 21:25) Since Jesus did so much on the earth, we might ask: 'How can he be our helper in heaven? Can we benefit from Jesus' tender compassion now?'

The answer is most heartwarming and reassuring. The Bible tells us that Christ entered "into heaven itself, now to appear before the person of God for us." (Hebrews 9:24) What did he do for us? The apostle Paul explains: "[Christ] entered, no, not with the blood of goats and of young bulls, but with his own blood, once for all time into the holy place ["heaven itself"] and obtained an everlasting deliverance for us."—Hebrews 9:12; 1 John 2:2.

What good news that is! Rather than ending Jesus' wonderful work in behalf of people, his ascension to heaven enabled him to do even more for mankind. That is because God, in his great undeserved kindness, appointed Jesus to serve as "a public servant"—a high

priest—"at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."—Hebrews 8:1, 2.

"A Public Servant"

In heaven, then, Jesus would be a public servant for mankind. He would do a work like that done by Israel's high priest in behalf of God's worshipers in ancient times. And what was that work? Paul explains: "Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it was necessary for this one [the ascended Jesus Christ] also to have something to offer."—Hebrews 8:3.

Jesus had something to offer that was far superior to what the ancient high priest offered. "If the blood of goats and of bulls" could bring a measure of spiritual cleanness to ancient Israel, "how much more [would] the blood of the Christ . . . cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God?"—Hebrews 9:13, 14.

Jesus is an outstanding public servant, too, because he has been granted immortality. In ancient Israel "many had to become priests in succession because of being prevented by death from continuing as such." But what about Jesus? Paul writes: "He . . . has his priesthood without any successors. Consequently he is able also to save completely those who

are approaching God through him, because he is always alive to plead for them.” (Hebrews 7:23-25; Romans 6:9) Yes, we have at God’s right hand in heaven a public servant who ‘is always alive to plead for us.’ Just think what that means for us now!

When Jesus was on earth, people flocked to him for help, and they sometimes traveled great distances to avail themselves of his assistance. (Matthew 4:24, 25) In heaven, Jesus is readily accessible to people of all nations. From his heavenly vantage point, he is always available as a public servant.

What Sort of High Priest Is Jesus?

The picture of Jesus Christ painted in the Gospel accounts leaves us with no doubt about his helpfulness and tender compassion. How self-sacrificing he was! On more than one occasion, his privacy was interrupted when he and his disciples were trying to get much-needed rest. Rather than feeling cheated out of precious moments of peace and quiet, “he was moved with pity” for the people who sought his assistance. Even when Jesus was tired, hungry, and thirsty, “he received them kindly” and was willing to forgo food if he could help sincere sinners.—Mark 6:31-34; Luke 9:11-17; John 4:4-6, 31-34.

Moved with pity, Jesus took practical steps to fill people’s physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. (Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 6:35-44) Furthermore, he taught them to find lasting

relief and comfort. (John 4:7-30, 39-42) How inviting, for example, is his personal invitation: “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls.” —Matthew 11:28, 29.

Jesus’ love for people was so great that he ultimately gave his life for sinful mankind. (Romans 5:6-8) In this regard the apostle Paul reasoned: “He [Jehovah God] who did not even spare his own Son but delivered him up for us all, why will he not also with him kindly give us all other things? . . . Christ Jesus is the one who died, yes, rather the one who was raised up from the dead, who is on the right hand of God, who also pleads for us.” —Romans 8:32-34.

A High Priest Who Can Sympathize

As a human, Jesus experienced hunger, thirst, tiredness, anguish, pain, and death. The stress and pressures that he endured equipped him in a very unique way to serve as High Priest for suffering mankind. Paul wrote: “[Jesus] was obliged to become like his ‘brothers’ in all respects, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, in order to offer propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered when being put to the test, he is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test.”—Hebrews 2:17, 18; 13:8.

Jesus demonstrated that he is qualified and willing to help people draw closer to God. Does this mean, however, that he has to persuade a harsh and unmerciful God who is reluctant to forgive? No indeed, for the Bible assures us that “Jehovah [is] good and ready to forgive.” It also says: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

What Do You Know About Witchcraft?

Fighters Against God Will Not Prevail!

Does the Bible Have a Hidden Code?

teousness." (Psalm 86:5; 1 John 1:9) Actually, Jesus' tender words and deeds reflect his Father's own compassion, mercy, and love. —John 5:19; 8:28; 14:9, 10.

How does Jesus bring relief to repentant sinners? By helping them to find joy and satisfaction in their sincere efforts to please God. In writing to fellow anointed Christians, Paul summed up the situation by saying: "Seeing,



Jesus knows how it feels to pray intensely to God

therefore, that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold onto our confessing of him. For we have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin. Let us, therefore, approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time."—Hebrews 4:14-16.

"Help at the Right Time"

What can we do, though, when confronted with problems that we feel are greater than we can handle—serious illness, the crushing burden of guilt, overwhelming discouragement, and depression? We can make use of the very provision that Jesus himself regularly relied on—the precious privilege of prayer. For example, on the night before he gave his life for us, "he continued praying more earnestly; and his sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:44) Yes, Jesus knows how it feels to pray to God with great intensity. He "offered up supplications and also petitions to the One who was able to save him out of death, with strong outcries and tears, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear." —Hebrews 5:7.

Jesus knows how much it means to humans to be "favorably heard" and strengthened. (Luke 22:43) Furthermore, he promised: "If you ask the Father for anything he will give it to you in my name. . . . Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be made full." (John 16:23, 24)

Hence, we can petition God with confidence that he will allow his Son to apply his authority and the value of his ransom sacrifice in our behalf.—Matthew 28:18.

We can be sure that in his heavenly capacity, Jesus will provide the right kind of help at the proper time. For example, if we have committed a sin that we sincerely regret, we can draw comfort from the assurance that "we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one." (1 John 2:1, 2) Our Helper



Christ will help us cope with problems greater than we alone can handle

and Comforter in heaven will plead for us so that our prayers in his name and in harmony with the Scriptures will be answered.—John 14:13, 14; 1 John 5:14, 15.

Showing Appreciation for Christ's Help

More is involved than petitioning God through his Son. With the value of his ransom sacrifice, “Christ by purchase” became, as it were, “the owner that bought” the human race. (Galatians 3:13; 4:5; 2 Peter 2:1) We can show our gratitude for all that Christ does for us by acknowledging his ownership of us and gladly responding to his invitation: “If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake day after day and follow me continually.” (Luke 9:23) ‘Disowning oneself’ is not simply a verbal claim of change of ownership. After all, Christ “died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them.” (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15) Therefore, appreciation for the ransom will have a profound effect on our outlook, goals, and life-style. Our eternal indebtedness to “Christ Jesus, who gave himself for us,” should motivate us to learn more about him and his loving Father, Jehovah God. We should also want to grow in faith, to live by God’s beneficial standards, and to be “zealous for fine works.” —Titus 2:13, 14; John 17:3.

The Christian congregation is the means whereby we receive timely spiritual food, encouragement, and guidance. (Matthew 24:45-47; Hebrews 10:21-25) For instance, if any are spiritually sick, they can “call the older men [appointed elders] of the congregation.” James adds the assurance: “And the prayer of faith will make the indisposed one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him.”—James 5:13-15.

To illustrate: A man serving a prison sentence in South Africa wrote to a congregation elder expressing appreciation for “all of Jeho-



Christ helps us by means of loving elders

vah's Witnesses who are carrying out the good work started by Jesus Christ in helping people strive toward God's Kingdom." Then he wrote: "I was overjoyed at having received your letter. Your concern for my spiritual redemption has touched me deeply. All the more reason for me to start heeding Jehovah God's call for repentance. For 27 years I've been stumbling and losing my way in the darkness of sin, deceit, illicit affairs, immoral practices, and dubious religions. After my introduction to Jehovah's Witnesses, I feel that I have at last found the way—the right way! All I have to do is follow it."

More Help in the Near Future

Deteriorating world conditions are clear evidence that we are living in the crucial time period that was to precede the outbreak of "the great tribulation." Right now, a great crowd out of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues are 'washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb.' (Revelation 7:9, 13, 14; 2 Timothy 3:1-5) By exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice, they are receiving forgiveness of their sins and are being helped to come into a close relationship with God—in fact, becoming his friends.—James 2:23.

The Lamb, Jesus Christ, "will shepherd [survivors of the great tribulation] and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:17) Christ will then carry his duties as High Priest to completion. He will help all of God's friends to benefit fully from the "fountains of waters of life"—spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally. What Jesus started in 33 C.E. and

what he has continued from heaven ever since will then be carried out to perfection.

Never give up, therefore, in showing deep appreciation for all that God and Christ have done—and are doing—for us. The apostle Paul urged: "Always rejoice in the Lord. . . . Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:4, 6, 7.

There is a significant way to show your appreciation for Jesus Christ, our Helper in heaven. After sundown on Wednesday, April 19, 2000, Jehovah's Witnesses around the world will gather to observe the Memorial of Christ's death. (Luke 22:19) This will be an opportunity to deepen your appreciation for Christ's ransom sacrifice. You are most warmly invited to attend and hear how God's marvelous arrangement for salvation through Christ can benefit you eternally. Please check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the exact time and place of this special meeting.

'O GOD, SEND OUT YOUR LIGHT'

"Send out your light and your truth. May these themselves lead me."—PSALM 43:3.

JEHOVAH is very considerate in the way he makes his purposes known to his servants. Instead of revealing the truth all at once in one blinding flash of light, he enlightens us progressively. Our trek along life's pathway might be

compared to a walk that a hiker takes down a long trail. He starts out early in the morning and sees little. As the sun begins to rise slowly over the horizon, the hiker is able to distinguish a few features of his surroundings. The rest he sees in hazy outline. But as the sun continues its ascent, he can see farther and

1. How does Jehovah reveal his purposes?



farther into the distance. So it is with the spiritual light that God provides. He allows us to discern a few things at a time. God's Son, Jesus Christ, provided spiritual enlightenment in a similar manner. Let us consider how Jehovah enlightened his people in ancient times and how he does so today.

² The composers of the 43rd Psalm likely were the sons of Korah. As Levites, they were privileged to teach God's Law to the people. (Malachi 2:7) Of course, Jehovah was their Grand Instructor, and they looked to him as the Source of all wisdom. (Isaiah 30:20) "O God, . . . send out your light and your truth," the psalmist prayed. "May these themselves lead me." (Psalm 43:1, 3) As long as the Israelites were faithful to him, Jehovah taught them his ways. Centuries later, Jehovah favored them with light and truth of a most remarkable kind. God did so when he sent his Son to the earth.

³ As the man Jesus Christ, God's Son was "the light of the world." (John 8:12) He taught the people "many things with illustrations"—new things. (Mark 4:2) He told Pontius Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world." (John 18:36) That was a new idea for a Roman and surely for nationalistic Jews, for they thought that the Messiah would bring the Roman Empire to its knees and restore Israel to its former glory. Jesus was reflecting light from Jehovah, but his words did not please Jewish rulers, who "loved the glory of men more than even the glory of God." (John 12:42, 43) Many of the people chose to cling to their human tradition rather than to accept spiritual light and truth from God.—Psalm 43:3; Matthew 13:15.

⁴ However, a few honesthearted men and

women joyfully embraced the truth that Jesus taught. They made steady progress in their understanding of God's purposes. As the end of their Teacher's earthly life drew near, though, they still had much to learn. Jesus told them: "I have many things yet to say to you, but you are not able to bear them at present." (John 16:12) Yes, the disciples would continue to grow in understanding of God's truth.

The Light Continues to Shine

⁵ After Jesus' death and resurrection, light from God shone more brightly than before. In a vision given to Peter, Jehovah revealed that uncircumcised Gentiles could henceforth become followers of Christ. (Acts 10:9-17) That was a revelation! Nevertheless, a question later arose: Did Jehovah require such Gentiles to get circumcised after they became Christians? That question had not been answered in the vision, and the matter became a subject of heated debate among Christians. It had to be settled, lest their precious unity be undermined. In Jerusalem, therefore, "the apostles and the older men gathered together to see about this affair."—Acts 15:1, 2, 6.

⁶ How could those present at that meeting determine God's will for believing Gentiles? Jehovah did not dispatch an angel to preside over the discussions, nor did he favor those present with a vision. Still, the apostles and older men were not left entirely without direction. They considered testimony from certain Jewish Christians who had seen how God had begun dealing with people of the nations, pouring out his holy spirit upon uncircumcised Gentiles. They also searched the Scriptures for guidance. As a result, the disciple James made a recommendation based on an enlightening scripture. As they pondered

2. How did Jehovah provide enlightenment in pre-Christian times?

3. In what way were the Jews put to the test by Jesus' teaching?

4. How do we know that Jesus' disciples would continue to grow in understanding?

5. What question arose in the first century, and who had the responsibility of settling it?

6. What procedure did the apostles and older men follow when they considered the question of circumcision?

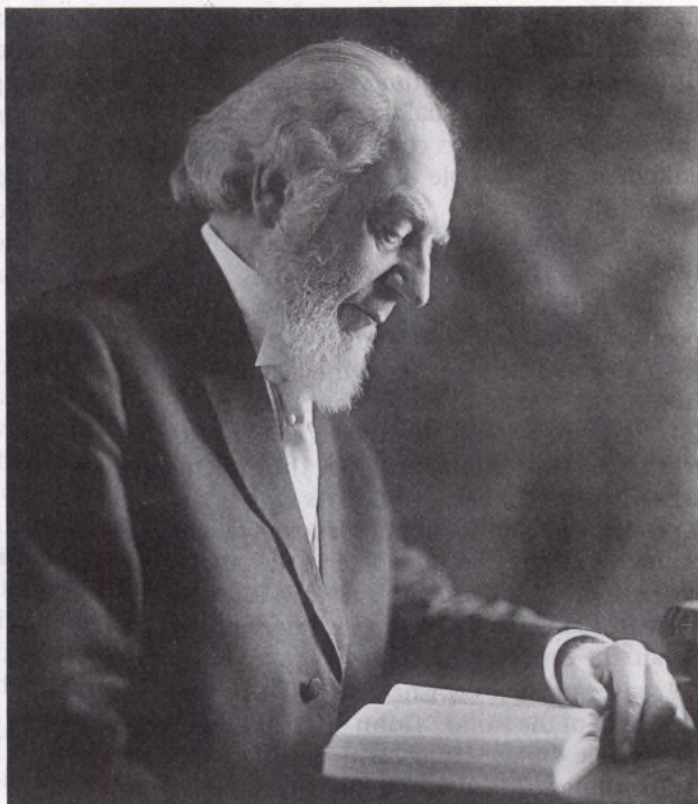
the evidence, God's will became clear. Those of the nations did not have to get circumcised in order to enjoy Jehovah's approval. The apostles and the older men wasted no time in putting the decision in writing so that fellow Christians could be guided by it.—Acts 15:12-29; 16:4.

⁷ Unlike the Jewish religious leaders, who clung to the traditions of their forefathers, most Jewish Christians rejoiced when they received this remarkable new understanding of God's purpose respecting the people of the nations, even though accepting it required a change of viewpoint regarding Gentiles in general. Jehovah blessed their humble spirit, and "the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day."—Acts 15:31; 16:5.

⁸ Spiritual light continued to shine throughout the first century. But Jehovah did not reveal every aspect of his purposes to the early Christians. The apostle Paul told first-century fellow believers: "At present we see in hazy outline by means of a metal mirror." (1 Corinthians 13:12) Such a mirror did not have the best reflective surface. At first, then, comprehension of spiritual light would be limited. After the death of the apostles, the light grew dim for a while, but in recent times Scriptural knowledge has become abundant. (Daniel 12:4) How does Jehovah enlighten his people today? And how should we respond

7. In what way were first-century Christians progressive?

8. (a) How do we know that more light could be expected after the first century came to a close?
(b) What pertinent questions will we consider?



Charles Taze Russell knew that light would shine on the book of Revelation in God's due time

when he broadens our understanding of the Scriptures?

The Light Gets Progressively Brighter

⁹ In modern times the first real glimmer of light began to appear in the last quarter of the 19th century as a group of Christian men and women began an earnest study of the Scriptures. They developed a practical method for Bible study. Someone would raise a question; then the group would analyze all related Scripture texts. When one Bible verse seemed to contradict another, these sincere Christians endeavored to harmonize the two. Unlike the religious leaders of the day, the Bible Students

9. What unique and effective method of Bible study was used by the early Bible Students?

(as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known) were determined to let the Holy Scriptures, not tradition or man-made dogma, be their guide. After they considered all available Scriptural evidence, they made a record of their conclusions. In that way their understanding of many basic Bible doctrines was cleared up.

¹⁰ Outstanding among the Bible Students was Charles Taze Russell. He wrote a series of six helpful Bible study aids entitled *Studies in the Scriptures*. Brother Russell intended to write a seventh volume, which would explain the Bible books of Ezekiel and Revelation. "Whenever I find the key," he said, "I will write the Seventh Volume." However, he added: "If the Lord gives the key to someone else, he can write it."

¹¹ The foregoing statement by C. T. Russell illustrates an important factor in our ability to understand certain Bible passages—timing. Brother Russell knew that he could not force the light to shine upon the book of Revelation any more than an anxious hiker can coax the sun to rise before its appointed time.

Revealed—But in God's Due Time

¹² Just as the apostles understood many prophecies concerning the Messiah only after Jesus' death and resurrection, Christians today understand Bible prophecy in its finest detail only after it has been fulfilled. (Luke 24:15, 27; Acts 1:15-21; 4:26, 27) Revelation is a prophetic book, so we should expect to understand it most clearly as the events it describes unfold. For example, C. T. Russell could not have correctly understood the meaning of the symbolic scarlet-colored wild beast mentioned at Revelation 17:9-11, since the organizations that

10. Charles Taze Russell wrote what helpful Bible study aids?

11. What connection is there between timing and our understanding of God's purposes?

12. (a) When is Bible prophecy best understood? (b) What example shows that our ability to understand Bible prophecy depends upon God's timetable? (See footnote.)

the beast represents, namely, the League of Nations and the United Nations, did not even exist until after his death.*

¹³ When the early Christians learned that uncircumcised Gentiles could become fellow believers, that change led to a new question regarding the need for people of the nations to be circumcised. This moved the apostles and older men to reexamine the entire issue of circumcision. The same pattern holds true today. A brilliant flash of light on one Bible subject sometimes leads God's anointed servants, "the faithful and discreet slave," to reexamine related topics, as the following recent example illustrates.—Matthew 24:45.

¹⁴ In 1971 an explanation of Ezekiel's prophecy was published in the book *"The Nations Shall Know That I Am Jehovah"*—How? A chapter of that book briefly discussed Ezekiel's vision of a temple. (Ezekiel, chapters 40-48) At the time, the focus was on how Ezekiel's temple vision would be fulfilled in the new world.—2 Peter 3:13.

¹⁵ However, two articles published in *The Watchtower* of December 1, 1972, affected our understanding of Ezekiel's vision. They discussed the great spiritual temple described by the apostle Paul in Hebrews chapter 10. *The Watchtower* explained that the Holy compartment and the inner courtyard of the spiritual

* After C. T. Russell's death, a publication designated as the seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures* was prepared in an attempt to provide an explanation of the books of Ezekiel and Revelation. The volume was based, in part, on comments that Russell had made on those Bible books. However, the time to reveal the meaning of those prophecies had not yet come, and in general, the explanation offered in that volume of *Studies in the Scriptures* was hazy. In the ensuing years, Jehovah's undeserved kindness and developments on the world scene have allowed Christians to discern the meaning of those prophetic books more accurately.

13. What sometimes occurs when light is shed on a certain Bible subject?

14-16. How did an adjustment in our viewpoint regarding the spiritual temple affect our understanding of Ezekiel chapters 40 to 48?

temple relate to the condition of the anointed while they are on the earth. When Ezekiel chapters 40 to 48 were reviewed years later, it was discerned that just as the spiritual temple is operating today, so the temple that Ezekiel saw in vision must also be functioning today. How so?

¹⁶ In Ezekiel's vision, priests are seen moving about in the courtyards of the temple as they serve the nonpriestly tribes. These priests clearly represent the "royal priesthood," Jehovah's anointed servants. (1 Peter 2:9) However, they will not be serving in the temple's earthly courtyard throughout the Thousand Year Reign of Christ. (Revelation 20:4) During most of that period, if not all of it, the anointed will be serving God in the spiritual temple's Most Holy, "heaven itself." (Hebrews 9:24) Since priests are seen going to and fro in the courtyards of Ezekiel's temple, that vision must be undergoing fulfillment today, while some of the anointed are still on the earth. Accordingly, the March 1, 1999, issue of this magazine reflected an adjusted view on this subject. Thus, clear down to the end of the 20th century, spiritual light was shed upon Ezekiel's prophecy.

Be Willing to Adjust Your Viewpoint

¹⁷ Anyone who wishes to come to a knowledge of the truth must be willing to bring "every thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5) That is not always easy, especially when viewpoints are strongly entrenched. For example, before learning God's truth, you may have enjoyed celebrating certain religious holidays with your family. After you began to study the Bible, you realized that these celebrations are actually of pagan origin. At first, you may have been reluctant to apply what you were learning. Finally, however, love for God proved to

¹⁷ What adjustments have you made in personal viewpoint since coming to a knowledge of the truth, and how have they benefited you?

be stronger than religious sentiment, and you stopped engaging in celebrations that displease God. Has not Jehovah blessed your decision?—Compare Hebrews 11:25.

¹⁸ We always benefit by doing things God's way. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) So when our view of a Bible passage is clarified, let us rejoice in advancing truth! Really, our continuing to be enlightened confirms that we are on the right path. It is "the path of the righteous ones," which "is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." (Proverbs 4:18) True, at present we see some aspects of God's purpose "in hazy outline." But when God's due time arrives, we will see the truth in all its beauty, provided that our feet have remained firmly planted on "the path." In the meantime, may we exult in the truths that Jehovah has made plain, awaiting enlightenment on those that are not yet clearly understood.

¹⁹ How can we demonstrate our love for the light in a practical way? One way is by reading God's Word regularly—daily if possible. Are you following a regular program of Bible reading? The *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines also furnish us with an abundance of whole-

18. How should we react when our understanding of Bible truth is clarified?

19. What is one way to show that we love the truth?

Can You Answer?

- Why does Jehovah reveal his purposes progressively?
- How did the apostles and older men in Jerusalem settle the issue of circumcision?
- What method of Bible study did the early Bible Students adopt, and why was it unique?
- Illustrate how spiritual light is revealed in God's due time.

some spiritual food to enjoy. Consider, too, the books, brochures, and other publications that have been prepared for our benefit. And what about the encouraging reports of the Kingdom-preaching activities that are published in the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*?

²⁰ Yes, Jehovah has in a wonderful way answered the prayer expressed at Psalm 43:3. At

20. What connection is there between light and truth from Jehovah and our attendance at Christian meetings?

the end of that verse, we read: "May [your light and truth] bring me to your holy mountain and to your grand tabernacle." Do you look forward to worshiping Jehovah, along with a multitude of others? The spiritual instruction presented at our meetings is an important way that Jehovah provides enlightenment today. What can we do to deepen our appreciation for Christian meetings? We invite you to consider this subject prayerfully in the following article.

HOW JEHOVAH IS LEADING US

"Lead me in the path of uprightness."—PSALM 27:11.

JEHOVAH is the Source of light and truth, as we learned in the preceding article. His Word lights our way as we travel along the path of uprightness. Jehovah leads us by instructing us in his ways. (Psalm 119:105) Like the psalmist of old, we gratefully respond to God's leadings and pray: "Instruct me, O Jehovah, in your way, and lead me in the path of uprightness."—Psalm 27:11.

² One way in which Jehovah provides instruction today is through Christian meetings. Do we take full advantage of this loving provision by (1) attending regularly, (2) listening carefully to the program, and (3) participating readily in parts involving the audi-

1, 2. (a) How is Jehovah leading his people today? (b) What is involved in taking full advantage of the meetings?



ence? Furthermore, do we respond gratefully when we receive suggestions that will help us to remain "in the path of uprightness"?

How Is Your Meeting Attendance?

³ Some Kingdom publishers have been attending meetings regularly since childhood. "When my sisters and I were growing up in the 1930's," recalls one full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses, "we did not have to ask our parents if we were going to the meeting. We knew that we were going unless we were ill. Our family just did not miss meetings." Like the prophetess Anna, this sister is "never missing" from Jehovah's place of worship.—Luke 2:36, 37.

3. How did one full-time servant develop the fine habit of regular meeting attendance?



Attending Christian meetings helps us to keep Jehovah's day in mind

⁴ Are you among those who attend Christian meetings regularly, or have you become sporadic in this respect? Some Christians who thought that they were doing quite well decided to make sure. For a few weeks, they made a note of every meeting they attended. When they reviewed the record at the end of the designated period, they were surprised at the number of meetings they had missed.

⁵ 'It is no wonder,' someone might say. 'People are under so much pressure today that it is not easy for them to be regular at meetings.' It is certainly true that we are living in stressful times. What is more, the pressure will undoubtedly increase. (2 Timothy 3:13) But does that not make it all the more critical to attend

meetings regularly? Without a steady diet of wholesome spiritual food to sustain us, we cannot hope to withstand the pressure that this system brings to bear. Why, without regular association we might be tempted to forsake "the path of the righteous" altogether! (Proverbs 4:18) True, when we arrive home at the end of a hard day, we may not always feel inclined to attend a meeting. When we do attend despite our fatigue, however, we benefit ourselves and we encourage our fellow Christians at the Kingdom Hall.

⁶ Hebrews 10:25 suggests another important reason why we should be regular in meeting attendance. There the apostle Paul exhorts fellow Christians to gather themselves together 'all the more so as they behold the day drawing near.' Yes, we must not lose sight of the fact that "the day of Jehovah" is

4-6. (a) Why do some Kingdom publishers miss meetings? (b) Why is it critical to attend meetings?



drawing near. (2 Peter 3:12) If we were to conclude that the end of this system is a long way off, we might begin allowing personal pursuits to crowd out necessary spiritual activities, such as meeting attendance. Then, as Jesus warned, 'suddenly that day could be instantly upon us.'—Luke 21:34.

Be a Good Listener

⁷ It is not enough merely to attend the meetings. We must listen carefully, paying attention to what is said there. (Proverbs 7:24) This includes our children. When a child goes to school, he is expected to pay attention to the teacher, even when a particular subject does not appeal to him or seems beyond his grasp. The teacher knows that if the child

7. Why is it important for children to pay attention at meetings?

tries to pay attention, he will derive at least some benefit from the lesson. Is it not reasonable, then, for school-age children to pay attention to the instruction provided at congregation meetings rather than be allowed to fall asleep as soon as the meeting begins? True, among the precious truths found in the Scriptures are "some things hard to understand." (2 Peter 3:16) But we should not underestimate a child's ability to learn. God does not. In Bible times, he commanded his young servants to 'listen and learn and fear Jehovah and take care to carry out all the words of this law,' some of which doubtless were hard for children to understand. (Deuteronomy 31:12; compare Leviticus 18:1-30.) Does Jehovah expect any less of children today?

⁸ Christian parents realize that their children's spiritual needs are partly filled by what they learn at the meetings. Hence, some parents arrange for their children to take a nap before the meetings so that they will arrive at the Kingdom Hall refreshed and ready to learn. Certain parents may strictly limit or even wisely rule out television viewing for their children on meeting nights. (Ephesians 5:15, 16) And such parents keep distractions to a minimum, encouraging their children to listen and to learn, in accordance with their age and ability.—Proverbs 8:32.

⁹ Jesus was speaking to adults when he said: "Pay attention to how you listen." (Luke 8:18) These days, that is often easier said than done. Admittedly, active listening is hard work, but the ability to listen can be developed. As you listen to a Bible talk or a meeting part, try to isolate the main ideas. Anticipate what the speaker is going to say next. Look for points that you can use in your ministry or apply in your life. Mentally review the

8. What steps do some parents take to help their children to be attentive at meetings?

9. What may help us develop our ability to listen?

points as they are being considered. Take brief notes.

¹⁰ Good listening habits are best learned at an early age. Even before they learn to read and write, some preschoolers are encouraged by their parents to take "notes" during meetings. They put a mark on a piece of paper when such familiar words as "Jehovah," "Jesus," or "Kingdom" are used. In this way, children can learn to concentrate on what is being said from the platform.

¹¹ Even older children sometimes need encouragement to pay attention. Noticing that his 11-year-old son was daydreaming during a Christian convention, one family head handed the lad a Bible and asked him to look up the scriptures as they were cited by the speakers. The father, who was taking notes, looked on as his son held the Bible. Thereafter, the boy followed the convention program with more enthusiasm.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

¹² King David sang: "I will march around your altar, O Jehovah, to cause thanksgiving to be heard aloud." (Psalm 26: 6, 7) Meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses provide splendid opportunities for us to express

10, 11. How have some parents helped their children to become better listeners, and what methods have you found helpful?

12, 13. Why is it important to participate in congregational singing?



There are various ways to praise Jehovah at Christian meetings



our faith aloud. One way we can do this is by sharing in congregational singing. This is an important aspect of our worship, but it can easily be neglected.

¹³ Some children who cannot yet read memorize the lyrics of the Kingdom songs that will be used at the meetings each week. They are thrilled to be able to sing along with the grown-ups. As children grow a little older, however, they may be less inclined to join in singing Kingdom songs. Some adults

are also shy about singing at the meetings. Yet, singing is part of our worship, just as the field ministry is part of our worship. (Ephesians 5:19) We do our best to praise Jehovah in the field ministry. Can we not also glorify him by lifting our voices—whether melodious or not—in heartfelt songs of praise?—Hebrews 13:15.

¹⁴ We also bring praise to God when we make upbuilding comments during the parts of our meetings that call for audience participation. This requires preparation. It takes time to ponder the deeper aspects of God's Word. The apostle Paul, an avid student of the Scriptures, realized this. He wrote: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge!" (Romans 11:33) Family heads, it is vital that you help each member of your family to search into God's wisdom, as revealed in the Scriptures. Set aside some time during the family Bible study to explain difficult points and to help your family prepare for the meetings.

¹⁵ If you would like to comment more frequently at meetings, why not work out in advance something you wish to say? Nothing elaborate is necessary. An appropriate Bible text read with conviction or a few well-chosen words spoken from the heart will be appreciated. Some publishers ask the study conductor to reserve the first comment on a specific paragraph for them, so that they will not miss the opportunity to express their faith.

The Inexperienced Become Wise

¹⁶ At meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, we are often reminded to read God's Word daily.

14. Why does the material we study at congregation meetings deserve careful advance preparation?

15. What suggestions may help one to comment at meetings?

16, 17. What counsel did one elder give to a ministerial servant, and why was it effective?

Doing so is refreshing. It also helps us make wise decisions, correct personality flaws, resist temptations, and recover our spiritual balance if we have taken a step in the wrong direction.—Psalm 19:7.

¹⁷ Experienced congregation elders stand ready to provide Scriptural counsel that is tailored to our needs. All we have to do is "draw it up" by seeking their Bible-based counsel. (Proverbs 20:5) One day an enthusiastic young ministerial servant asked an elder for suggestions on how to become more useful in the congregation. The elder, who knew the young man well, opened his Bible to 1 Timothy 3:3, which states that appointed men must be "reasonable." He kindly pointed out ways that the young man could display reasonableness in his relations with others. Was the young brother offended by the frank counsel he received? Not at all! "The elder used the Bible," he explained, "so I realized that the counsel was coming from Jehovah." The ministerial servant gratefully applied the counsel and is making fine progress.

¹⁸ God's Word can also help young people to "flee from the desires incidental to youth." (2 Timothy 2:22) A young Witness of Jehovah who recently graduated from high school was able to resist temptation throughout her school years by meditating on and applying certain Bible texts. She often thought of the counsel recorded at Proverbs 13:20: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise." Accordingly, she was careful to cultivate friendships only with those who deeply respect Scriptural principles. She reasoned: "I am no better than anyone else. If I become involved with the wrong crowd, I will want to please my friends, and that could lead to trouble." Paul's counsel recorded at 2 Timothy

18. (a) What helped one young Christian to resist temptation in school? (b) What Bible texts do you call to mind when faced with temptation?

1:8 also helped her. He wrote: "Do not become ashamed of the witness about our Lord, . . . but take your part in suffering evil for the good news." In harmony with that counsel, she boldly shared her Bible-based beliefs with her classmates on every appropriate occasion. Whenever she was assigned to present an oral report to the class, she chose a subject that allowed her to give a tactful witness regarding God's Kingdom.

¹⁹ If ever we should stray from "the path of the righteous," God's Word can help us to correct our steps. (Proverbs 4:18) A young man living in Africa learned this firsthand. When one of Jehovah's Witnesses visited him, he accepted a Bible study. He enjoyed what he was learning but soon became involved in bad association at school. In time, he drifted into an immoral life-style. "My conscience kept tormenting me, and I had to stop attending meetings," he admits. Later, he began to attend meetings again. The young man made this revealing comment: "I discovered that the main reason for all of this was that I was starved spiritually. I did no personal study. That is why I could not stand up to temptation. Then I started to read *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* Gradually, I regained my spiritual strength and cleaned up my life. This was a good witness to those who noticed the changes I made. I got baptized, and now I am happy." What gave this young man the strength to overcome his fleshly weaknesses? He regained his spiritual strength by regular, personal Bible study.

²⁰ Christian youths, you are under attack today! If you are to resist Satan's assaults, you must take in spiritual food regularly. The psalmist, evidently a young man himself, understood this. He thanked Jehovah for pro-

19. Why was one young man unable to resist the pressures of this world, but what gave him spiritual strength?

20. How can a young person resist Satan's assaults?

viding his Word, so that 'a young man could cleanse his path.'—Psalm 119:9.

Wherever God Leads, We Will Follow

²¹ Jehovah led the nation of Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land. The route he chose may have seemed needlessly arduous from a human perspective. Instead of taking the apparently easier, more direct route along the Mediterranean Sea, Jehovah led his people on a difficult desert route. This, however, was actually a kindness on God's part. Although shorter, the sea route would have taken the Israelites through the land of the hostile Philistines. By choosing another route, Jehovah spared his people an early confrontation with the Philistines.

²² Similarly, the path along which Jehovah is leading us today may seem difficult at times. Each week, we have a full schedule of Christian activities, including congregation meetings, personal study, and field service. Other paths may seem easier. But only if we follow God's lead will we arrive at the destination that we are working so hard to reach. Therefore, let us continue to take in vital instruction from Jehovah and remain on "the path of uprightness" forever!—Psalm 27:11.

21, 22. Why should we not conclude that the way of the truth is too difficult?

Can You Explain?

- Why do we especially need to attend Christian meetings regularly?
- What can parents do to help their children pay attention at the meetings?
- What is involved in being a good listener?
- What can help us to comment at meetings?

Modesty

A QUALITY
THAT
PROMOTES
PEACE

How pleasant the world would be if everyone displayed modesty. Individuals would be less demanding, family members less quarrelsome, corporations less competitive, and nations less belligerent. Would you like to live in such a world?

TRUE servants of Jehovah God are preparing for his promised new world, in which modesty will be universally regarded, not as a weakness, but as a strength and a virtue. (2 Peter 3: 13) In fact, they are developing the quality of modesty even now. Why? Especially because this is what Jehovah requires of them. His prophet Micah wrote: "He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?"—Micah 6:8.

Modesty can mean a number of things, such as a lack of conceit, or vanity, and a reluctance to boast about one's abilities, achievements, and possessions. According to one reference work, modesty also means

"keeping within bounds." A modest person stays within the bounds of good behavior. He also acknowledges that there are limits to what he ought to do and is able to do. He knows that there are things to which he is not entitled. We surely feel drawn to modest people. "Nothing is more amiable than true modesty," wrote English poet Joseph Addison.

Modesty is not a natural trait of imperfect humans. We must put forth effort to develop this quality. For our encouragement, God's Word describes a number of incidents that illustrate modesty in its various forms.

Two Modest Kings

One of Jehovah's most loyal servants was David, who was a young man when he was anointed as the future king of Israel. Thereafter, reigning King Saul put David under great pressure by trying to kill him and by forcing him to live as a fugitive.—1 Samuel 16:1, 11-13; 19:9, 10; 26:2, 3.

Even under those circumstances, David recognized that there were limits to what he should do when protecting his life. On one occasion in the wilderness, David refused to allow Abishai to harm sleeping King Saul, saying: "It is unthinkable, on my part, from Jehovah's standpoint, to thrust my hand out against the anointed of Jehovah!" (1 Samuel 26:8-11) David knew that it was not his place to remove Saul from the position of king. Thus David showed modesty on this occasion by staying within the bounds of proper behavior. Likewise, God's present-day servants know that "from Jehovah's standpoint," there are things they simply cannot do, even when human life is at stake.—Acts 15:28, 29; 21:25.

King David's son Solomon also manifested modesty as a young man, though in a slightly different manner. When Solomon was enthroned, he felt inadequate to carry the weighty responsibility of king. He prayed: "Jehovah my God, you yourself have made your servant king in the place of David my father,

and I am but a little boy. I do not know how to go out and how to come in." Clearly, Solomon was aware of his own lack of ability and experience. He was then modest, showing no conceit, or vanity. Solomon asked Jehovah for discernment, and his request was granted.—1 Kings 3:4-12.

The Messiah and His Forerunner

Over 1,000 years after Solomon's day, John the Baptizer performed a work of preparing the way for the Messiah. As forerunner of the Anointed One, John was fulfilling Bible prophecy. He could have boasted about his privilege. John could also have tried to bring honor to himself because he was a fleshly relative of the Messiah. But John told others that he was unworthy even to untie Jesus' sandal. And when Jesus presented himself for baptism in the Jordan River, John said: "I am the one needing to be baptized by you, and are you coming to me?" This indicates that John was not a boastful person. He was modest.—Matthew 3:14; Malachi 4:5, 6; Luke 1:13-17; John 1:26, 27.

After Jesus was baptized, he embarked on a full-time ministry, preaching the good news of God's Kingdom. Even though Jesus was a perfect man, he said: "I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative . . . I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." Furthermore, Jesus did not seek honor from men, but he gave Jehovah the glory for everything he did. (John 5:30, 41-44) What modesty!

Clearly, then, loyal servants of Jehovah—such as David, Solomon, John the Baptizer, and even the perfect man Jesus Christ—displayed modesty. They did not boast, were not vain, or conceited, and kept within proper bounds. Their examples are reasons enough for modern-day servants of Jehovah to develop and display modesty. Yet, there are still other reasons for doing so.

In this turbulent period of mankind's history, modesty is a quality that is of great value to true Christians. It enables one to be at peace

with Jehovah God, with fellow humans, and with oneself.

Peace With Jehovah God

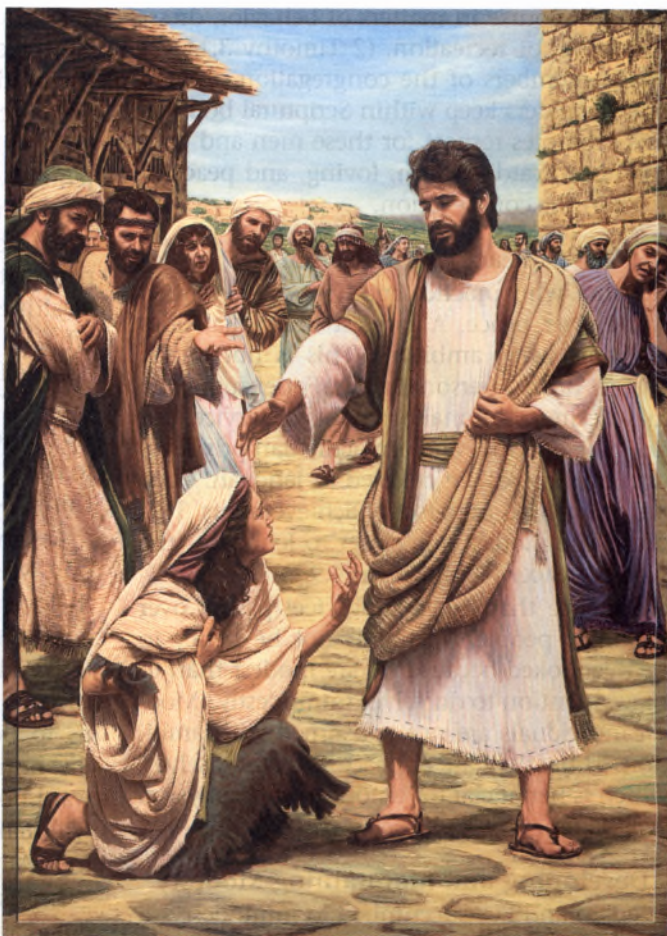
Peace with Jehovah is possible only if we keep within the bounds he sets for true worship. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, exceeded the limits laid down by God, and they became the first humans to fall victim to immodesty. They forfeited their good standing with Jehovah, as well as their home, their future, and their lives. (Genesis 3: 1-5, 16-19) What a heavy price they paid!

Let us learn from the failure of Adam and Eve, for true worship places limitations on how we must act. For instance, the Bible states that "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) Jehovah wisely sets these limits for our good, and we show wisdom by keeping within these bounds. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Proverbs 11:2 tells us: "Wisdom is with the modest ones."

What if a religious organization tells us that we can override these limits and still enjoy peace with God? That organization is trying to mislead us. On the other hand, modesty helps us to cultivate a close relationship with Jehovah God.

Peace With Fellow Humans

Modesty also promotes peaceful relations with others. For instance, when parents set an example in being contented with their necessities and in giving priority to spiritual matters, their children are more likely to adopt the



Jesus modestly gave Jehovah the credit for everything he did

same attitude. The younger ones will then find it easier to be contented, even if they may not always get what they want. This will help them to live modestly, and family life will be more peaceful.

Those who have oversight need to exercise particular care to be modest and not abuse their authority. For example, Christians are instructed: "Do not go beyond the things that are written." (1 Corinthians 4:6) Congregation elders realize that they must not try to impose on others their own personal preferences. Instead, they use God's Word as a basis for encouraging

the right course in matters of behavior, dress, grooming, or recreation. (2 Timothy 3:14-17) When members of the congregation observe that the elders keep within Scriptural bounds, this promotes respect for these men and contributes toward a warm, loving, and peaceful spirit in the congregation.

Peace With Oneself

Those who practice modesty are rewarded with inner peace. A modest individual does not burn with ambition. This is not to say that he has no personal goals. For example, he may desire additional privileges of service, but he waits on God, and any Christian privileges that he receives are credited to Jehovah. They are not viewed as personal achievements. This draws the modest one closer to Jehovah, "the God of peace."—Philippians 4:9.

Suppose that we at times feel passed over by other people. Would it not be better to be overlooked because we are modest than to draw attention to ourselves immodestly? Modest individuals are not consumed with ambition. Thus, they are at peace with themselves, which is beneficial for emotional and physical well-being.

Developing and Maintaining Modesty

Adam and Eve succumbed to immodesty—a trait they passed on to their offspring. What can help us to avoid making the same mistake as our first parents? How can we develop the fine quality of modesty?

To begin with, an accurate understanding of our position in relation to Jehovah, the Creator of the universe, will help us. What personal achievements could we claim that could ever compare with God's accomplishments? Jehovah asked his faithful servant Job: "Where did you happen to be when I founded the earth? Tell me, if you do know understanding." (Job 38:4) Job could give no answer. Are we not similarly limited in knowledge, ability, and experience? Is it not beneficial for us to acknowledge our limitations?

Furthermore, the Bible tells us: "To Jehovah belong the earth and that which fills it, the productive land and those dwelling in it." This includes "every wild animal of the forest, the beasts upon a thousand mountains." Jehovah can say: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine." (Psalm 24:1; 50:10; Haggai 2:8) What possessions could we display that compare with those of Jehovah? Why, even the wealthiest human has no reason to boast in what he owns! Therefore, it is wise to follow the apostle Paul's inspired counsel to Christians in Rome: "Through the undeserved kindness given to me I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think."—Romans 12:3.

As servants of God desiring to cultivate modesty, we should pray for the fruitage of the spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22, 23) Why? Because each of these qualities will make it easier for us to be modest. For instance, love for fellow humans will help us to fight a tendency toward boastfulness or conceit. And self-control will make us stop and think before acting immodestly.

Let us beware! We constantly need to be on guard against the pitfalls of immodesty. Two of the kings mentioned earlier were not modest on every occasion. King David threw caution to the wind by carrying out a census in Israel, something that was against the will of Jehovah. King Solomon became immodest even to the point of engaging in false worship.—2 Samuel 24:1-10; 1 Kings 11:1-13.

As long as this godless system of things lasts, being modest calls for constant vigilance. However, the effort is worthwhile. In God's new world, human society will consist only of those who are modest. They will regard modesty as a strength, not a weakness. How wonderful it will be when all individuals and families are blessed with the peace that comes with modesty!

An Exemplary Man Who Accepted Correction

“ZAMBIA Crocs Eat 30 People a Month.” So reported an African newspaper some years ago. According to a zoologist who caught these reptiles for study, “it took 12 men to hold down one croc.” With a powerful tail and mighty jaws, the crocodile can be a terrifying animal!

Apparently referring to the crocodile as “Leviathan,” the Creator used this “king over all majestic wild beasts” to teach his servant Job an important lesson. (Job 41:1, 34) This took place about 3,500 years ago in the land of Uz, likely somewhere in northern Arabia. While describing this creature, God told Job: “None is so audacious that he should stir it up. And who is it that can hold his ground before me?” (Job 41:10) How true! If we are afraid of the crocodile, how much more should we fear to speak against the One who created it! Job

showed appreciation for this lesson by confessing his error.—Job 42:1-6.

When Job is mentioned, we may recall his faithful example in enduring trial. (James 5: 11) Actually, Jehovah took pleasure in Job even before his faith was severely tested. In God’s estimation, at that time there was “no one like him in the earth, a man blameless and upright, fearing God and turning aside from bad.” (Job 1:8) This should move us to learn more about Job, as doing so will help us to see how we too can please God.

Relationship With God Came First

Job was a wealthy man. Besides gold, he had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 she-asses, 1,000 head of cattle, and a very large body of servants. (Job 1:3) But Job trusted in Jehovah, not in riches. He reasoned: “If I have put gold as my confidence, or to gold I have said, ‘You are my trust!’ If I used to rejoice because my property was much, and because my hand had found a lot of things . . . , that too would be an error for attention by the justices, for I should have denied the true God above.” (Job 31:



24-28) Like Job, we should value a close relationship with Jehovah God far more than material things.

Just Dealings With Fellow Humans

How did Job deal with his servants? That they found him to be just and approachable is indicated by Job's own words: "If I used to refuse the judgment of my slave man or of my slave girl in their case at law with me, then what can I do when God rises up? And when he calls for an accounting, what can I answer him?" (Job 31:13, 14) Job valued Jehovah's mercy and thus dealt mercifully with his slaves. What a fine example, especially for those who have positions of oversight within the Christian congregation! They too must be fair, impartial, and approachable.

Job also showed interest in those outside his household. Revealing his concern for others, he said: "If I used to hold back the lowly ones from their delight, and the eyes of the widow I would cause to fail, . . . if I waved my hand to and fro against the fatherless boy, when I would see need of my assistance in the gate, let my own shoulder blade fall from its shoulder, and let my own arm be broken from its upper bone." (Job 31:16-22)

May we be as considerate of disadvantaged ones whom we know in the congregation.

Because of his unselfish interest in his fellowman, Job was hospitable to strangers. Thus, he could say: "Outside no alien resident

would spend the night; my doors I kept open to the path." (Job 31:32) What a fine example this is for God's servants today! When those newly interested in Bible truth come to the Kingdom Hall, our receiving them hospitably may contribute to their spiritual progress. Of course, traveling overseers and other Christians need our loving hospitality too.—1 Peter 4:9; 3 John 5-8.

Job had the right attitude even toward his enemies. He did not rejoice over calamity that might befall someone who hated him. (Job 31:29, 30) Instead, he was willing to do good to such people, as seems evident from his readiness to pray for his three false comforters.—Job 16:2; 42:8, 9; compare Matthew 5:43-48.

Sexually Chaste

Job was loyal to his marriage mate, never allowing his heart to develop an improper attachment to another woman. Said Job: "A covenant I have concluded with my eyes. So how could I show myself attentive to a virgin? If my heart has been enticed toward a

Job showed loving concern for orphans, widows, and others

woman, and I kept lying in wait at the very entranceway of my companion, let my wife do the grinding for another man, and over her let other men kneel down. For that would be loose conduct, and that would be an error for attention by the justices.”—Job 31:1, 9-11.

Job did not let immoral desires corrupt his heart. Rather, he pursued an upright course. No wonder Jehovah God took pleasure in this faithful man who fought against immoral enticements!—Matthew 5:27-30.

Concerned About Family Spirituality

At times, Job’s sons arranged banquets at which all his sons and daughters were present. After these banquet days had passed, Job was very concerned lest his children had sinned against Jehovah in some way. So Job took action, for the Scriptural account states: “It would occur that when the banquet days had gone round the circuit, Job would send and sanctify them; and he got up early in the morning and offered up burnt sacrifices according to the number of all of them; for, said Job, ‘maybe my sons have sinned and have cursed God in their heart.’” (Job 1:4, 5) How this must have impressed upon Job’s family members his concern that they have reverential fear of Jehovah and walk in His ways!

Today, Christian family heads need to instruct their families in God’s Word, the Bible. (1 Timothy 5:8) And it is surely fitting to pray for family members.—Romans 12:12.

Endured Faithfully Under Test

Most Bible readers are familiar with the severe tests that came upon Job. Satan the Devil had asserted that under trying conditions Job would curse God. Jehovah accepted this challenge, and without delay Satan brought calamity upon Job. He lost all his livestock. Worse still, he suffered the loss of all his children in death. Shortly thereafter, Satan struck Job with a malignant boil from head to foot.—Job, chapters 1, 2.

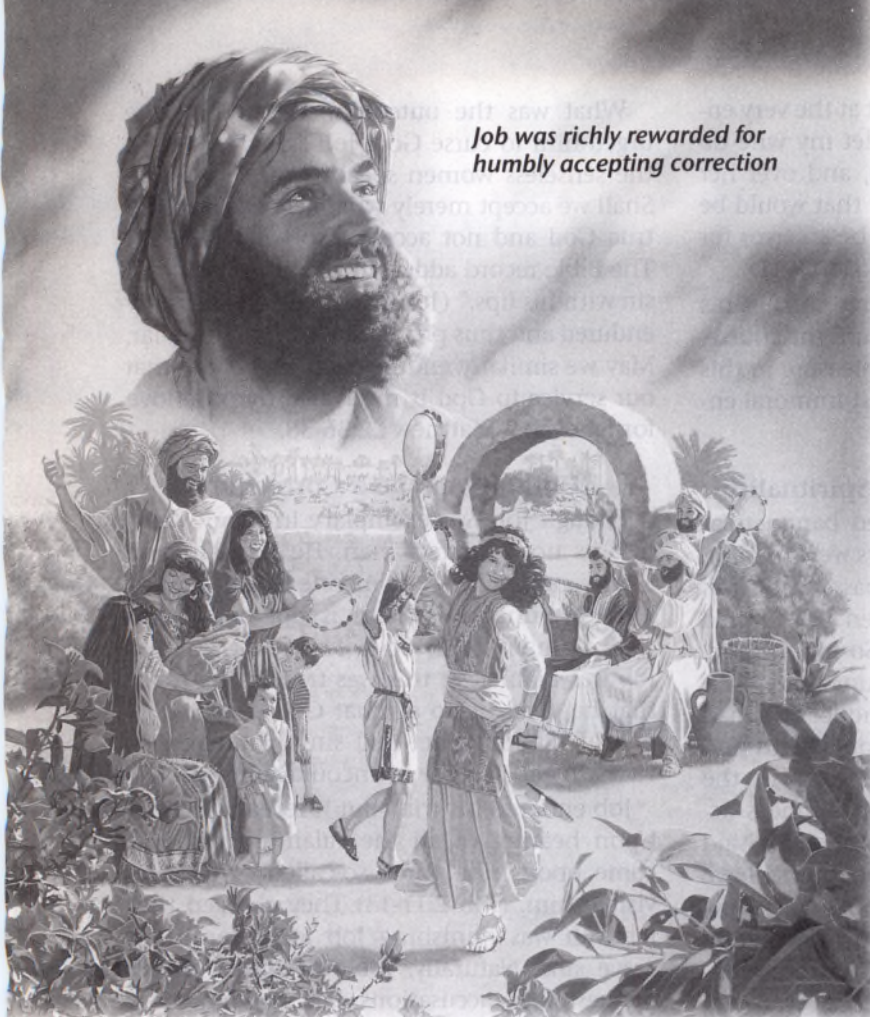
What was the outcome? When his wife urged him to curse God, Job said: “As one of the senseless women speaks, you speak also. Shall we accept merely what is good from the true God and not accept also what is bad?” The Bible record adds: “In all this Job did not sin with his lips.” (Job 2:10) Yes, Job faithfully endured and thus proved the Devil to be a liar. May we similarly endure trials and prove that our service to God is motivated by pure love for Jehovah.—Matthew 22:36-38.

Humbly Accepted Correction

Though Job was exemplary in many ways, he was not a perfect man. He himself said: “Who can produce someone clean out of someone unclean? There is not one.” (Job 14:4; Romans 5:12) So when God said that Job was blameless, this was true in the sense that he lived up to all that God expected of one of his imperfect and sinful human servants. What a source of encouragement!

Job endured his trial, but it revealed a flaw. Upon hearing of all the calamity that had come upon him, three so-called comforters visited him. (Job 2:11-13) They charged that Jehovah was punishing Job for committing grave sins. Naturally, Job was hurt because of these false accusations, and he vigorously sought to make a defense. But he became unbalanced in trying to justify himself. Why, Job even implied that he was more righteous than God is!—Job 35:2, 3.

Because God loved Job, He used a young man to point out Job’s error. The account says: “The anger of Elihu . . . came to be hot. Against Job his anger blazed over his declaring his own soul righteous rather than God.” As Elihu observed: “Job has said, ‘I certainly am in the right, but God himself has turned aside the judgment of me.’” (Job 32:2; 34:5) Nevertheless, Elihu did not join the three “comforters” in wrongly concluding that God was punishing Job for his sins. Instead, Elihu expressed confidence in the faithfulness of Job,



*Job was richly rewarded for
humbly accepting correction*

Though we may be doing well in Jehovah's service, we will make mistakes. If a mistake is serious, Jehovah may correct us by some means. (Proverbs 3:11, 12) A scripture that pricks our conscience may come to mind. Perhaps *The Watchtower* or some other publication of the Watch Tower Society may say something that makes us aware of an error. Or possibly a fellow Christian will kindly point out that we have failed to apply a Bible principle. How will we react to such correction? Job manifested a contrite spirit, saying: "I make a retraction, and I do repent in dust and ashes."—Job 42:6.

Rewarded by Jehovah

Jehovah rewarded Job, allowing his servant to live on for another 140 years. During that time, he received far more than he had lost. And though Job final-

ly died, he is sure to have a resurrection into God's new world.—Job 42:12-17; Ezekiel 14:14; John 5:28, 29; 2 Peter 3:13.

and he advised him: "The legal case is before [Jehovah], and so you should wait anxiously for him." Indeed, Job should have waited on Jehovah instead of speaking rashly in his own defense. Elihu assured Job: "Justice and abundance of righteousness [God] will not belittle."—Job 35:14; 37:23.

Job's thinking needed to be corrected. Therefore, Jehovah gave him a lesson in man's littleness compared with God's greatness. Jehovah pointed to the earth, the sea, the starry heavens, the animals, and to many other marvels of creation. Finally, God spoke of Leviathan—the crocodile. Job humbly accepted correction, and in this he sets a further example.

We too can be sure of God's favor and blessing if we serve him loyally and accept all the Bible-based correction that comes our way. As a result, we will have the sure hope of life in God's new system of things. More important, we will honor God. Our faithful conduct will be rewarded and will add to the proof that his people serve him, not for selfish reasons, but out of wholehearted love. How privileged we are to make Jehovah's heart rejoice, as did faithful Job, who humbly accepted correction!—Proverbs 27:11.

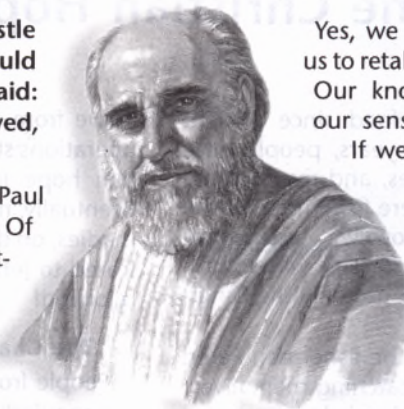
Questions From Readers

At Romans 12:19, was the apostle Paul indicating that Christians should not become wrathful, when he said: "Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath"?

Strictly speaking, no. The apostle Paul was here referring to God's wrath. Of course, this is not to say that it matters not whether Christians give in to anger. The Bible clearly counsels us against becoming wrathful. Consider a sampling of divine counsel.

"Let anger alone and leave rage; do not show yourself heated up only to do evil." (Psalm 37:8) "Everyone who continues wrathful with his brother will be accountable to the court of justice." (Matthew 5:22) "The works of the flesh are manifest, and they are fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct, idolatry, practice of spiritism, enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger." (Galatians 5:19, 20) "Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you." (Ephesians 4:31) "Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." (James 1:19) Furthermore, the book of Proverbs repeatedly counsels us against giving way to wrath or being prone to anger over petty offenses and human errors.—Proverbs 12:16; 14:17, 29; 15:1; 16:32; 17:14; 19:11, 19; 22:24; 25:28; 29:22.

The context of Romans 12:19 is in line with such counsel. Paul recommended that our love be without hypocrisy, that we bless those persecuting us, that we try to think well of others, that we not return evil for evil, and that we strive to be peaceable with all. He then urged: "Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.'"—Romans 12:9, 14, 16-19.



Yes, we should not let anger move us to retaliate with acts of vengeance. Our knowledge of situations and our sense of justice are imperfect.

If we let anger move us to acts of vengeance, we will often do wrong. That would serve the ends of God's Adversary, the Devil. Paul elsewhere wrote: "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state, neither allow

place for the Devil."—Ephesians 4:26, 27.

The better course, the wiser course, is to let God determine when and upon whom vengeance is to be brought. He can do so with full knowledge of the facts, and any retribution he takes will reflect his perfect justice. We can see that this is Paul's point at Romans 12:19 when we note his reference to Deuteronomy 32:35, 41, which includes these words: "Vengeance is mine, and retribution." (Compare Hebrews 10:30.) Thus, even though the words "of God" are not found in the Greek text, a number of modern translators have inserted them at Romans 12:19. This leads to such readings as "let God take revenge" (*The Contemporary English Version*); "give place unto the wrath of God" (*American Standard Version*); "let God punish if he will" (*The New Testament in Modern English*); "leave a place for divine retribution."—*The New English Bible*.

Even when abused or persecuted by enemies of the truth, we can manifest trust in the description of Jehovah God that Moses heard: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin, but by no means will he give exemption from punishment."—Exodus 34:6, 7.

Sharing the Christian Hope in Senegal

FISH has been a staple food since ancient times. For thousands of years, people have fished the earth's seas, lakes, and rivers. Some of Jesus Christ's apostles were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. To them, however, Jesus introduced another kind of fishing. This was spiritual fishing that would benefit not only the fishermen but also the fish.

In this regard, Jesus told the fisherman Peter: "From now on you will be catching men alive." (Luke 5:10) This kind of fishing is being carried on today in more than 230 lands, including Senegal. (Matthew 24:14) Here modern-day "fishers of men" courageously share their Christian hope with others.—Matthew 4:19.

Senegal is located on the most westerly tip of Africa. It stretches from sandy desert areas bordering the Sahara in the north to humid forests of the Casamance region in the south. Senegal is a land swept by the parching winds of the desert as well as by the cool, refreshing breezes of the Atlantic. Here live more than nine million people. Inhabitants of Senegal are known for their hospitality. Most do not profess to be Christians. Many are shepherds, while others are herdsmen of cattle, camels, and goats. There are also farmers, cultivating peanuts, cotton, and rice. Yes, and there are fishermen, bringing in nets full of fish from the Atlantic Ocean and from several large rivers that wind through the country. The fishing industry plays a vital role in the economy of Senegal. In fact, the famous national dish is *ceebu jën*, a tasty meal of rice, fish, and vegetables.

"Fishers of Men"

There are 863 zealous preachers of God's Kingdom in Senegal. Spiritual fishing began here in the early 1950's. A branch office of the Watch Tower Society was opened in Dakar, the capital, in 1965. Missionary "fishers" began to

arrive from many faraway countries. "Fishing" operations started, and the sharing of the Christian hope in Senegal steadily moved ahead. Eventually, new branch facilities were built at Almadies, on the outskirts of Dakar, and were dedicated to Jehovah in June 1999. What a time of rejoicing!

The Challenge of Accepting the Truth

People from a great diversity of backgrounds are regularly being contacted, and some have responded favorably to the message of hope found in God's Word. Although many have no knowledge of the Bible, they rejoice to learn that the promises Jehovah God made to the faithful prophets of old are soon to be fulfilled.

Often it takes courage to take a firm stand for Christian principles, especially when family traditions and customs are involved. For example, polygamy is widely practiced in Senegal. Consider the case of a man who had two wives when he began to study the Bible. Would he have the courage to accept Christian truth and conform to the Scriptural requirement to be the husband of only one wife? (1 Timothy 3:2) And would he keep the wife of his youth, the woman he married first? That is what he did, and he now serves as a zealous elder in one of the larger congregations in the Dakar area. His first wife has also accepted the truth along with all of his 12 children, 10 from his first wife and 2 from his former second wife.

Another obstacle to accepting the Christian hope may be illiteracy. Does this mean that an illiterate person cannot accept and practice the truth? Not at all. Consider the example of Marie, a hardworking mother of eight young children. She quickly saw the importance of discussing a Bible text with her young ones each day before they left for school and she went to work. But

SENEGAL

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Sharing the Christian hope in Senegal

The brothers then reasoned with him from the Scriptures and explained Revelation 21:4. The beggar was deeply touched by this message of hope and by the fact that someone was interested enough in him to stop and discuss the Bible. Tears filled his eyes. Instead of asking for money, he implored the brothers to take all the coins that he had in his begging can! He was so insistent that this attracted the attention of everyone passing by. Only with great dif-

ficulty did the brothers persuade him to keep the money. He finally agreed but insisted that they visit him again.

The large university in Dakar is also adding to the catch in the spiritual fishing net. There a medical student named Jean-Louis began to study the Bible. He accepted the truth quickly, dedicated his life to Jehovah, and was baptized. His desire was to serve God in the full-time pioneer service, but he also enjoyed his study of medicine. Because of a contract with his home country, he was obliged to complete his studies. Yet, he began serving as an auxiliary pioneer at the same time. Shortly after receiving his diploma as a qualified physician, he was invited to serve in a large Bethel home in Africa as the family doctor. Another young man contacted at Dakar University is also now serving with the Bethel family in his home country.

Spiritual fishing in Senegal certainly is rewarding. The Bible literature of Jehovah's Witnesses is greatly appreciated and is now being produced in the local Wolof language. Hearing the good news in their mother tongue has encouraged many honesthearted people to respond gratefully. With Jehovah's blessing, no doubt many more symbolic fish will be caught, as Senegal's zealous "fishers of men" continue to share the Christian hope faithfully and courageously.

how could she do this, since she could not read? Early every morning, she took the booklet *Examining the Scriptures Daily* and stood on the sandy street in front of her house. As people passed by, she asked them if they could read. When she found someone who could, she handed over the booklet and earnestly said: "I cannot read, so would you please read this section to me today?" She listened attentively to the reading. Next she thanked the passerby and quickly entered her house to have a lively discussion of the text with her children before they left for school!

People of All Sorts Respond

In Senegal, people can be found sitting in the streets selling fish, vegetables, or fruit at the market or reclining under a majestic baobab tree drinking *ataya*, a somewhat bitter green tea. Determined to share the good news with all whom they met, two brothers spoke with a disabled man who was begging in the street. After greeting him, they said: "Many people give you money but do not stop to talk. We have come by to talk to you about something very important that concerns your future." The beggar was surprised. "We would like to ask you a question," the brothers continued. "Why do you think there is so much suffering in the world?" "It's God's will," replied the beggar.

WHAT SHE MISSES ABOUT NEW YORK CITY



THE sign seen here has been prominently displayed on one of the Watchtower Society's factory buildings in Brooklyn, New York, since the 1950's. Commuters, tourists, and others who pass by are reminded to read the Bible daily. The following letter, received from a young Witness girl, shows the effectiveness of this reminder.

"I was discussing with a classmate of mine what I wanted to do when I got out of high school. I started talking about Bethel, the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, and she got very excited. She told me that she had lived in New York City all her life. Her family was not very religious, but every morning when she looked out the window,

there was a sign that said 'Read God's Word the Holy Bible Daily.' So every day she read her Bible before she left to go to school.

"After moving out of the city, she said that the thing she misses about New York City is that when she wakes up, she no longer sees the reminder to read her Bible. But because of the sign on the Watchtower building, Bible reading has become a habit, so she continues to read the Bible daily!"

What could be a better way to start the day than by reading a portion of God's Word! In so doing, you will no doubt come to appreciate the apostle Paul's words: "The holy writings . . . are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus."—2 Timothy 3:15-17.