

AUGUST 2018

# THE WATCHTOWER

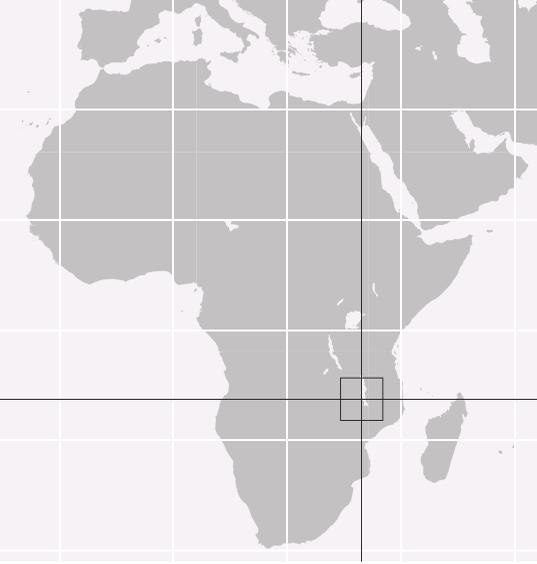
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

SIMPLIFIED EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
OCTOBER 1-28, 2018

LARGE  
PRINT  
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

# MALAWI

A circuit overseer and his wife are ready to travel to the next congregation that they will visit. Their bicycles carry Bible literature, a projector, a sound system, and most of their personal belongings

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of the Holy Scriptures.

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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Why must we carefully choose the information we read and share with others in e-mails or text messages?

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How can we imitate Jesus if someone tells a lie about us?

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What three Bible principles can help us to evaluate information?

# Do You Have the Facts?

*“When anyone replies to a matter before he hears the facts, it is foolish and humiliating.”*

—PROVERBS 18:13.

**WE ALL** need to learn how to evaluate information and use it to reach accurate conclusions. (Proverbs 3:21-23; 8:4, 5) Otherwise, it will be easy for Satan and his world to distort our thinking.

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**1, 2.** (a) What important ability do we need to develop, and why? (b) What will we discuss in this article?

(Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 2:8) Of course, to reach accurate conclusions, we must get the facts. Proverbs 18:13 says: “When anyone replies to a matter before he hears the facts, it is foolish and humiliating.”

<sup>2</sup> In this article, we will see what can make it difficult to get the facts and reach accurate conclusions. We will also learn about Bible principles and examples that teach us how to evaluate information.

## **DO NOT BELIEVE “EVERY WORD”**

<sup>3</sup> Today, there is information coming at us from all directions. It comes through the Internet, television, and other media. We may also receive many e-mails, text messages, and stories from friends. Sometimes it seems that there is no end to all this information. So we need to be careful. Our friends probably have good intentions, but there are other people who deliberately spread wrong information or distort the facts. What Bible principle can help us to evaluate what we hear? Proverbs 14:15 says: “The naive person believes every word, but the shrewd one ponders each step.”

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3. Why do we need to apply the Bible principle found at Proverbs 14:15? (See opening picture.)

**4 To make good decisions, we need reliable facts. Thus, we must be very careful when we choose what we read. (Read Philippians 4:8, 9.) We should not waste our time viewing unreliable Internet news sites or reading e-mails that spread rumors. It is especially important that we avoid websites where apostates promote their ideas. They want to weaken the faith of God’s people and distort the truth. Unreliable information leads to poor decisions. Never think that false information will not affect you. —1 Timothy 6:20, 21.**

**5 False stories can lead to terrible results. In Moses’ time, 12 spies went to the Promised Land. Ten spies returned saying negative things. (Numbers 13:25-33) They exaggerated the facts, and Jehovah’s people became frightened and discouraged. (Numbers 14:1-4) Why did the people react this way? Maybe they thought that the story was true because most of the spies said the same thing. So they refused to listen to the good things that the other two spies said about the Promised Land. (Numbers 14:6-10) Instead of getting the facts and**

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**4. How can Philippians 4:8, 9 help us to choose what we read, and why is it very important to have accurate information? (See also the box “A Few Provisions to Help Us Get the Facts.”)**

**5. What false story did the Israelites hear, and how did it affect them?**



## A FEW PROVISIONS TO HELP US GET THE FACTS

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What provisions have been made so that God's people can stay up-to-date with accurate information?

### **BREAKING NEWS:**

This feature on the [jw.org](http://jw.org) website gives brief updates to Jehovah's people on major events happening around the world.

### **NEWSROOM:**

This regular section of the [jw.org](http://jw.org) website has more detailed reports. It discusses matters that affect our freedom of worship and describes how we provide help when there are natural disasters.

### **JW BROADCASTING:**

This Internet television station provides updates on what Jehovah's Witnesses are doing all over the earth.

trusting in Jehovah, the people foolishly chose to believe the negative story.

<sup>6</sup> We need to be especially careful when we hear stories about Jehovah's people. Remember that our enemy Satan is called "the accuser of our brothers." (Revelation 12:10) Jesus warned that opposers would "lyingly say every sort of wicked thing" against us. (Matthew 5:11) If we take that warning seriously, we will not be shocked when we hear strange stories about Jehovah's people.

<sup>7</sup> Do you like to send e-mails and text messages to your friends? When you see an interesting story in the news or hear a unique experience, do you feel like a news reporter who wants to share it right away? Before you send the e-mail or text, ask yourself: 'Am I sure that this story is true? Do I really have the facts?' If you are not sure, you might be spreading lies. So if you do not know whether a story is true, do not send it. Delete it!

<sup>8</sup> There is another reason why it is dangerous to

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6. Why should we not be surprised when we hear shocking stories about Jehovah's people?

7. What should we ask ourselves before we send an e-mail or a text message?

8. What have opposers in some lands done, and how could we help them without meaning to?

forward e-mails and text messages without thinking. In some lands, our work is restricted or even banned. Our opposers in these countries may purposely spread stories that are designed to frighten us or make us suspicious of one another. Think of what happened in the former Soviet Union. The secret police, known as the KGB, spread rumors that some well-known brothers had betrayed Jehovah's people.\* (See footnote.) Sadly, many brothers believed these false stories and left Jehovah's organization. Many of them later returned, but some never did. They allowed those false stories to destroy their faith. (1 Timothy 1:19) How can we avoid such a disaster? Refuse to spread negative or unconfirmed stories. Do not believe everything you hear. Instead, be sure that you have the facts.

## INCOMPLETE INFORMATION

<sup>9</sup> Sometimes we hear stories that are only partly true. Other stories do not give all the facts. This makes it difficult to reach accurate conclusions. We can never trust a story that is only partly true!

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\* See the *2004 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 111-112, and the *2008 Yearbook*, pages 133-135.

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9. What else makes it difficult to get accurate information?

What can we do so that we are not tricked by such stories?—Ephesians 4:14.

<sup>10</sup> We can learn from what happened to the Israelites who lived on the western side of the Jordan River in the days of Joshua. (Joshua 22:9-34) They heard that the Israelites on the eastern side of the Jordan had built a large altar near the river. That part of the story was true, but it was not the whole story. And it made the Israelites on the western side think that their brothers on the eastern side had rebelled against Jehovah, so they got together to start a war against them. (Read Joshua 22:9-12.) But before they attacked, the Israelites from the western side sent some men to find out the facts. What did the men learn? The Israelites on the eastern side had not built the altar to make sacrifices to false gods. They had built it as a memorial to let everyone know that they worshipped Jehovah. The Israelites must have been happy that they did not go to war against their brothers but took the time to get all the facts.

<sup>11</sup> There may come a time when we personally are

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**10.** Why did some Israelites almost start a war against their brothers, and what helped them to avoid it?

**11.** (a) How was Mephibosheth treated unfairly? (b) How could David have treated Mephibosheth fairly?

hurt because people spread stories about us that are only partly true. This is what happened to Mephibosheth. King David generously gave Mephibosheth all the land that belonged to his grandfather Saul. (2 Samuel 9:6, 7) But later David heard a negative story about Mephibosheth. He did not check whether the story was true, and he took away all of Mephibosheth's property. (2 Samuel 16:1-4) When David later spoke to him, David realized that he had made a mistake. He then gave some of the property back to Mephibosheth. (2 Samuel 19:24-29) If David had taken the time to get the facts instead of quickly reacting to incomplete information, Mephibosheth would not have suffered this injustice at all.

<sup>12</sup> What can you do if someone spreads lies about you? This happened to both Jesus and John the Baptizer. (Read Matthew 11:18, 19.) What did Jesus do? He did not use all his time and energy to convince people that the stories were false. Instead, he encouraged people to look at the facts. He wanted them to focus on what he did and what he taught. Jesus said: "Wisdom is vindicated by its works." —Matthew 11:19, footnote.

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12, 13. (a) What did Jesus do when people lied about him?  
(b) What can we do if someone lies about us?

<sup>13</sup> We can learn a valuable lesson from Jesus. Sometimes people may say unfair or negative things about us, and we may worry that this could damage our reputation. But the way we live can show others what we are really like. As we learn from Jesus' example, our good conduct can disprove any half-truths and false accusations.

### **DO YOU RELY ON YOURSELF?**

<sup>14</sup> We have seen that it can be difficult to get reliable facts. Another problem is our own imperfection. We may have been serving Jehovah for many years and may have become wise in certain ways. Others may respect us because we are able to think clearly. Could this become a problem for us?

<sup>15</sup> Yes. We could begin to rely on our own understanding. We may let our own feelings and ideas control how we think. We may start to believe that we understand a situation even though we do not have all the facts. This is very dangerous! The Bible clearly warns us that we should not rely on our own understanding.—Proverbs 3:5, 6; 28:26.

<sup>16</sup> For example, imagine that one evening an ex-

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**14, 15.** Why should we not rely on our own understanding?

**16.** In this example, what happened in a restaurant, and what did Tom think?

perienced elder named Tom goes to a restaurant and sees another elder, John, sitting at a table with a woman who is not his wife. They seem to be having a good time together. Tom sees them laugh and hug each other. He is very worried and wonders: ‘Will John and his wife get divorced? What about their children?’ Tom has seen similar things happen before. How would you feel if you were Tom?

<sup>17</sup> But wait. Although Tom is assuming that John is being unfaithful to his wife, does he have all the facts? Later that evening, Tom calls John and finds out that the woman is John’s sister, who is visiting from far away. John and his sister have not seen each other for many years. And because she was staying for just a few hours, John only had enough time to meet her for a meal in a restaurant. His wife was not able to join them. Tom was glad that he had not told anyone else what he thought! What do we learn from this? No matter how long we have been serving Jehovah, we still need to get the facts before we can reach an accurate conclusion.

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17. In this example, what did Tom later find out, and what can we learn from this?

<sup>18</sup> It can also be difficult to evaluate a situation correctly when it involves a brother we do not get along well with. If we keep thinking about our differences, we may become suspicious of our brother. Then, if we hear something negative about him, we may want to believe it, even if there is no proof that it is true. What is the lesson for us? If we allow ourselves to have negative feelings about our brothers, it can cause us to reach wrong conclusions that are not based on facts. (1 Timothy 6:4, 5) We should not allow bad feelings such as envy and jealousy to remain in our heart. Never forget that Jehovah wants us to love our brothers and to forgive them from the heart.—Read Colossians 3:12-14.

## **BIBLE PRINCIPLES WILL PROTECT US**

<sup>19</sup> Today, it is very difficult to get reliable facts and to evaluate them correctly. Why? Much of the information available is incomplete or only partly true, and we are imperfect. What can help us? The principles we find in God's Word! For example, one principle tells us that it is foolish to reply before we

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**18.** What could cause us to believe something bad about our brother?

**19, 20.** (a) What Bible principles will help us to evaluate information accurately? (b) What will we discuss in the next article?

hear the facts. (Proverbs 18:13) Another one helps us to see that we should not believe everything we hear without checking whether it is true. (Proverbs 14:15) And no matter how long we have been serving Jehovah, we cannot trust our own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5, 6) Bible principles will protect us if we use reliable facts to reach accurate conclusions and to make wise decisions.

<sup>20</sup> But there is another reason why we may find it hard to find the truth of a situation. As humans, we are quick to judge things based on what we can see. In the next article, we will discuss areas in which we could make this mistake and learn how to avoid this.

## SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

### **To evaluate information:**

To examine information carefully to see whether it is true or not. Some information may be only partially true, or it may be distorted

### **To reach accurate conclusions:**

To see matters as they really are. Then we can make wise decisions



**SONGS:**  
142, 123

## Do Not Judge by the Outward Appearance

**WHAT DO THESE  
SCRIPTURES  
TEACH US ABOUT  
JUDGING OTHERS?**

*“Stop judging by the outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”—JOHN 7:24.*

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Acts 10:34, 35

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Leviticus 19:15

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1 Timothy 4:12

ISAIAH’S prophecy about Jesus Christ encourages us and gives us hope. Isaiah foretold that Jesus would “not judge by what appears to his eyes, nor reprove simply according to what his ears hear” and that he would “judge the lowly with fairness.” (Isaiah

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1. What did Isaiah prophesy about Jesus, and why is this encouraging?

11:3, 4) Why is this encouraging? Because we live in a world that is full of prejudice, and people judge one another by what they can see. We really need the perfect Judge, Jesus, who will never judge us by our outward appearance!

<sup>2</sup> Every day, we form opinions about others. But we are not perfect like Jesus, so our opinions also are not perfect. We are easily influenced by what we see. Yet, Jesus commanded: “Stop judging by the outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:24) So Jesus wants us to be like him and not judge others by their appearance. In this article, we will discuss three things that can influence our opinions: a person’s race or nationality, how much money he has, and how old he is. In each case, we will learn how we can obey Jesus and not judge others by their appearance.

## **DO NOT JUDGE BY RACE OR NATIONALITY**

<sup>3</sup> Imagine how the apostle Peter felt when he was asked to go to Caesarea, to the home of a Gentile named Cornelius! (Acts 10:17-29) Peter had grown

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2. What did Jesus command us to do, and what will we discuss in this article?

3, 4. (a) Why did Peter change his view of Gentiles? (See opening picture.) (b) What new truth did Jehovah teach Peter?

up believing that Gentiles were unclean. But some things had recently happened that made him think differently. For example, he had received a vision from God. (Acts 10:9-16) In the vision, Peter saw what looked like a sheet coming down from heaven, filled with animals that were considered unclean. Then a voice told him: “Get up, Peter, slaughter and eat!” Peter firmly refused. Then the voice said: “Stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed.” After the vision, Peter did not understand what the voice was trying to tell him. Just then, messengers from Cornelius arrived. The holy spirit directed Peter to go to Cornelius’ home, so he went with the messengers.

<sup>4</sup> If Peter had judged “by the outward appearance,” he would never have gone to Cornelius’ home. Jews never went to the homes of Gentiles. So why did Peter go? Even though he was prejudiced against Gentiles, the vision he had seen and the direction of the holy spirit changed the way he thought. After Peter listened to Cornelius, he said: “Now I truly understand that God is not partial, but in every nation the man who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34, 35) This new understanding was exciting for Peter, and it would affect all Christians. How?

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah used Peter to help all Christians to understand that He is not partial. To Jehovah, our race, nationality, tribe, or language does not matter. As long as we fear God and do what is right, we are acceptable to him. (Galatians 3:26-28; Revelation 7:9, 10) You probably already know this. But what if you grew up in a country or a family where prejudice was common? Even though you may think that you are impartial, is it possible that you may still have some feelings of prejudice? Even after Peter helped others to see that God is not partial, he still showed prejudice. (Galatians 2:11-14) So how can we obey Jesus and stop judging others by their appearance?

<sup>6</sup> To find out whether we have any feelings of prejudice, we need to examine ourselves. We need to compare our attitude with what we learn in God's Word. (Psalm 119:105) We could also ask a friend whether he has noticed any prejudice in us that we cannot see in ourselves. (Galatians 2:11, 14) We may be so used to these feelings that we do not even realize we are prejudiced! This is what happened to

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5. (a) What does Jehovah want all Christians to understand? (b) Even though we know the truth, what feelings may we still have?
6. (a) What can help us to get rid of prejudice? (b) What did one responsible brother's report reveal about him?

one responsible brother. He wrote a report about a hardworking couple who were in full-time service. The husband was from an ethnic group that many people viewed as inferior. The responsible brother wrote many good things about the husband but added: “Although he is of [this nationality], his manners and way of life help others to understand that being [from this ethnicity] does not necessarily mean having a dirty, inferior lifestyle, typical of many from [this] descent.” What is the lesson for us? No matter how much responsibility we have in Jehovah’s organization, we must examine ourselves and accept help so that we may identify any remaining feelings of prejudice. What else can we do?

<sup>7</sup> If “we have opened wide our heart,” we will replace prejudice with love. (2 Corinthians 6:11-13) Do you prefer to spend time only with people of your own race, nationality, tribe, or language? If so, try to spend time with others as well. You could invite brothers and sisters from different backgrounds to work with you in the ministry. Or you could invite them to your home for a meal or a gathering. (Acts 16:14, 15) In time, your heart will be so full of love that there will be no room for prej-

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7. How can we show that “we have opened wide our heart”?

udice. Now let us discuss another way that we might judge “by the outward appearance.”

## **DO NOT JUDGE BY WEALTH OR POVERTY**

<sup>8</sup> Our view of others could be affected by how rich or how poor they are. Leviticus 19:15 says: “You must not show partiality to the poor or show preference to the rich. With justice you should judge your fellow man.” How could someone’s wealth or poverty affect the way we view him?

<sup>9</sup> Solomon was inspired to record this sad truth: “The poor man is hated even by his neighbors, but many are the friends of the rich person.” (Proverbs 14:20) What does this proverb teach us? If we are not careful, we could want to make friends with wealthy brothers and not with poor ones. Why is it so dangerous to judge people based on what they have or do not have?

<sup>10</sup> If we judge our brothers based on whether they are rich or poor, we could create divisions in the congregation. This happened in some congregations

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8. What can we learn from Leviticus 19:15 about how wealth or poverty could affect our view of others?

9. What sad truth did Solomon record, and what does it teach us?

10. What problem did James warn Christians about?

in the first century, and James warned those Christians about it. (Read James 2:1-4.) We cannot allow divisions to exist in our congregation. How, then, can we avoid judging people based on what they have?

<sup>11</sup> We must view our brothers as Jehovah does. A person is not precious to Jehovah because he is rich or because he is poor. Our relationship with Jehovah has nothing to do with how much money or how many material things we have. It is true that Jesus said that “it will be difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of the heavens,” but he did not say that it would be impossible. (Matthew 19:23) Jesus also said: “Happy are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20) But this did not mean that all poor people would listen to Jesus and receive special blessings. There were many poor people who did not follow Jesus. The truth is, we cannot judge a person’s relationship with Jehovah by the material things he has.

<sup>12</sup> Among Jehovah’s people, there are brothers and sisters who are rich and others who are poor.

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11. Do material things affect a person’s relationship with Jehovah? Explain.

12. What do the Scriptures teach both rich and poor people?

But they all love Jehovah and serve him with a complete heart. The Scriptures tell rich people “to place their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God.” (Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19.) God’s Word also warns all of Jehovah’s servants, rich and poor, that it is dangerous to love money. (1 Timothy 6:9, 10) When we view our brothers as Jehovah does, we will not judge them by what they have or do not have. But what about someone’s age? Is that a reason to judge others?

## **DO NOT JUDGE BY AGE**

<sup>13</sup> The Bible often mentions that we must respect older people. Leviticus 19:32 says: “Before gray hair you should rise up, and you must show honor to an older man, and you must be in fear of your God.” Proverbs 16:31 tells us that “gray hair is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness.” Paul told Timothy not to criticize older men but to treat them as fathers. (1 Timothy 5:1, 2) Even though Timothy had some authority over older brothers, he always needed to be compassionate and respectful.

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13. What does the Bible teach us about showing respect to older people?

**14** What if someone older sins willfully or promotes something that does not please Jehovah? Jehovah will not excuse a willful sinner, even if the person is older and respected. Note the principle found at Isaiah 65:20: “The sinner will be cursed, even though he is a hundred years of age.” We find a similar principle in Ezekiel’s vision. (Ezekiel 9:5-7) What is most important, then, is that we respect Jehovah, the Ancient of Days. (Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14) Our respect for him will give us the courage we need to correct a person who needs help, no matter how old he is.—Galatians 6:1.

**15** What if a brother is young? Does this mean that he does not deserve respect? No. Paul wrote to Timothy: “Never let anyone look down on your youth. Instead, become an example to the faithful ones in speaking, in conduct, in love, in faith, in chasteness.” (1 Timothy 4:12) When Paul wrote this, Timothy was probably about 30 years old. Yet, Paul had given him very important responsibilities. What is the lesson? We should not judge younger brothers

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**14.** When may we need to correct a person who is older than we are?

**15.** What do we learn from the apostle Paul about showing respect for younger brothers?



Do you show respect for younger brothers?  
(See paragraph 15)

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**by their age. Think about all that Jesus had done by the time he was only 33!**

**<sup>16</sup> In some cultures, people do not respect younger men. As a result, some elders may not recommend**

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**16, 17. (a) How do elders decide if a brother qualifies to be a ministerial servant or an elder? (b) How might personal opinions or local customs go against what the Scriptures say?**

a young man to serve as a ministerial servant or an elder, even if he qualifies to do so. But the Bible never says that a brother needs to be a certain age before he can be appointed as a ministerial servant or an elder. (1 Timothy 3:1-10, 12, 13; Titus 1:5-9) If an elder makes a rule about this because of his culture, he is not following God's Word. Elders should not judge younger men based on their own opinions or on local customs but on the standards in God's Word.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

<sup>17</sup> If elders do not follow the Bible's standards for appointing ministerial servants or elders, they could hold back brothers who qualify to be appointed. In one country, a ministerial servant handled important responsibilities well, and the elders agreed that he met the Bible's qualifications for being an elder. However, some older elders said that he looked too young to be an elder, so they did not recommend him. Sadly, this brother was not appointed, and it was all because of the way he looked. And it seems that this way of thinking is common in many parts of the world. It is very important that we rely on the Bible rather than on our own opinions or on local customs. Then we will obey Jesus and stop judging others by their appearance.

## JUDGE WITH RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

<sup>18</sup> We are imperfect, but we can still learn to see others without prejudice, as Jehovah does. (Acts 10:34, 35) So we must always pay attention to the reminders from God’s Word. When we apply them, we obey Jesus’ command to “stop judging by the outward appearance.”—John 7:24.

<sup>19</sup> Soon our King, Jesus Christ, will judge all people. His judgment will be based on God’s righteous standards, not on what he sees or hears. (Isaiah 11:3, 4) We truly look forward to that wonderful time!

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18, 19. What will help us to see our brothers as Jehovah does?

### SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

#### **Do not judge by the outward appearance:**

Jesus never evaluated others based on things such as their race, wealth, or age. He always looked at who a person truly was. Even though we are imperfect, we can imitate Jesus by seeing people as Jehovah does



**SONGS:**  
76, 110

**HOW WOULD YOU  
ANSWER?**

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How do we know that all humans can be generous?

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How will giving of ourselves in the preaching work make us happy?

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What reasons for being generous do we find in the Bible?

## Generous Givers Are Happy People

*“There is . . . happiness in giving.”*  
—ACTS 20:35.

**THERE** was a time when Jehovah was completely alone. Then he decided to give the gift of life to intelligent creatures in the heavens and on the earth. “The happy God,” Jehovah, loves to give good things. (1 Timothy 1:11; James 1:17) And because Jehovah wants us

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1. What proves that Jehovah is generous?

to be happy too, he teaches us to be generous.—Romans 1:20.

<sup>2</sup> God made humans in his image. (Genesis 1:27) This means that Jehovah created us with the qualities that he has. To be truly happy and have Jehovah's blessing, we need to follow his example. We need to be interested in other people and be generous givers. (Philippians 2:3, 4; James 1:5) Why? Because that is how Jehovah designed us. Even though we are imperfect, we can imitate Jehovah and be generous too.

<sup>3</sup> We are now going to discuss some lessons that the Bible teaches about generosity. We will learn why Jehovah is pleased when we are generous. We will also learn how generosity helps us to do the work that Jehovah has given us to do and why we are happy when we are generous. And we will discuss why we should continue to be generous.

## **JEHOVAH IS PLEASED WHEN WE ARE GENEROUS**

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah wants us to imitate him, so it makes him

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2, 3. (a) Why are we happy when we are generous? (b) What will we learn in this article?

4, 5. How have Jehovah and Jesus been generous, and why should we imitate them?

happy when we are generous. (Ephesians 5:1) Jehovah also wants humans to be happy. We know this because he made us in a wonderful way and made our beautiful earth and everything on it for us to enjoy. (Psalm 104:24; 139:13-16) So we honor Jehovah when we try to make others happy.

<sup>5</sup> We also imitate Jesus, who set the perfect example of how a human can be generous. He said: “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matthew 20:28) And the apostle Paul encouraged Christians: “Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus . . . He emptied himself and took a slave’s form.” (Philippians 2:5, 7) So we can ask ourselves, ‘Can I follow Jesus’ example even more closely?’—**Read 1 Peter 2:21.**

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah is pleased when we follow the perfect example that he and Jesus set for us. We do this by being interested in people and looking for ways to help them. Jesus showed how important this is when he told the story of the neighborly Samaritan. (**Read Luke 10:29-37.**) He taught his followers that they must help others, no matter who they are or where they are from. Do you remember why Jesus told that

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6. What did Jesus teach us in the story of the neighborly Samaritan? (See opening picture.)

story? It was because a Jewish man asked him: “Who really is my neighbor?” Jesus’ answer teaches us that like the Samaritan, we must be generous if we want to please Jehovah.

<sup>7</sup> Another reason to be generous is related to what happened in the garden of Eden. Satan claimed that Adam and Eve would be happier if they disobeyed Jehovah and thought only about themselves. Eve was selfish and wanted to be like God. Adam was selfish and wanted to please Eve more than he wanted to please God. (Genesis 3:4-6) The results were disastrous. Clearly, no one can be happy when he is selfish. But when we are unselfish and generous, we show that we believe that Jehovah’s way of doing things is the best.

## **DO THE WORK GOD HAS GIVEN US TO DO**

<sup>8</sup> Although Adam and Eve were alone in the garden of Eden, they should have thought of others. Why? Jehovah had given them work to do. He told them to fill the earth with their children and make it a paradise. (Genesis 1:28) Adam and Eve should have wanted their future children to be happy, just as Jehovah

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7. How do we show we believe that Jehovah’s way of doing things is the best? Explain.

8. Why should Adam and Eve have thought of others?

wanted them all to be happy. Together, they would all work to make the whole earth a paradise. That would be a huge project!

<sup>9</sup> Perfect humans would also need to work closely with Jehovah in order to make the earth a paradise and accomplish his will. In this way, they would enter into his rest. (Hebrews 4:11) Imagine how satisfying and enjoyable this work would have been! Jehovah would have blessed them very much for being unselfish and caring for others.

<sup>10</sup> Today, Jehovah has given us a special work to do. He wants us to preach and make disciples. To do this work, we really have to care about people. In fact, we can keep doing this work only if we have the right motive: love for Jehovah and love for people.

<sup>11</sup> Paul said that he and other Christians in the first century were “God’s fellow workers” because they preached and taught people the truth. (1 Corinthians 3:6, 9) Today, we too can be “God’s fellow workers” by generously giving of our time, energy, and material things to do the preaching work that God has given us. This is a great honor!

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9. Why would humans have been happy while making the earth a paradise?

10, 11. What will help us to preach and make disciples?



Helping someone learn the truth will bring you great joy  
(See paragraph 12)

<sup>12</sup> Being generous with our time and energy when we preach and teach brings us great joy. That is what many brothers and sisters who have had the opportunity to conduct Bible studies say. We are very happy to see our students get excited when they understand what the Bible can teach us, develop real faith, make changes in their life, and start telling others about what they are learning. Jesus was also very happy when the 70 preachers he sent out “returned with joy” because of the good experiences they had. —Luke 10:17-21.

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12, 13. What would you say are the rewards of making disciples?

**13 Our brothers and sisters around the world are joyful when they see how the Bible’s message helps people improve their life. For example, a young single sister named Anna wanted to do more for Jehovah.\* (See footnote.) So she moved to an area in Eastern Europe where more preachers are needed.**

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\* Name has been changed.

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When we visit every house in our territory, we give people  
the opportunity to listen to the Kingdom message  
(See paragraph 14)



She wrote: “There are a lot of opportunities to conduct Bible studies here, and I like that very much. My service gives me great joy. When I get home, I don’t have time to focus on myself. I think about those with whom I am studying—their troubles and anxieties. I look for ways to encourage them and help them in practical ways. And I have become convinced that ‘there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.’”—Acts 20:35.

<sup>14</sup> Even if people do not listen to us when we preach, we can be happy because we give them the opportunity to hear the good news. Jehovah expects us to do the same thing he asked Ezekiel to do: “You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or not.” (Ezekiel 2:7; Isaiah 43:10) So no matter how people respond, Jehovah values our efforts. (Read Hebrews 6:10.) One brother said about his ministry: “We have planted, watered, and prayed in hopes that Jehovah will make the interest grow.”—1 Corinthians 3:6.

## HOW WE CAN BE HAPPY

<sup>15</sup> Jesus wants us to be generous because it makes

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14. How can you enjoy preaching even if people do not listen?

15. Should we be generous only if people are grateful to us? Explain.

us happy. When we are generous, many people will be generous in return. So he encourages us: “Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing. For with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return.” (Luke 6:38) Of course, when you are generous, not all people will be grateful. But even when they are not, keep giving. You never know how much good you can do with just one generous deed.

<sup>16</sup> Truly generous people do not give because they expect to get something in return. Jesus said: “When you spread a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you.” (Luke 14:13, 14) The Bible also states: “The generous person will be blessed,” and “Happy is anyone who shows consideration to the lowly one.” (Proverbs 22:9; Psalm 41:1) We should be generous because we really want to help others.

<sup>17</sup> When Paul quoted Jesus’ words that “there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving,” he was not talking just about giving material things. We can also give people encouragement, advice from

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16. Whom should we be generous to, and why?

17. What are some ways we can give that will make us happy?

the Bible, and practical help. (Acts 20:31-35) By what Paul said and did, he taught us how important it is to be generous with our time, our energy, our attention, and our love.

<sup>18</sup> Researchers who study human behavior have also found that giving makes people happy. According to one article, people say that they feel a lot happier after they do nice things for others. Researchers say that when we help others, we feel that our life has purpose and meaning. So some experts suggest that people do volunteer work to be healthier and happier. Of course, what they have found does not surprise us, because our loving Creator, Jehovah, has always said that giving makes us happy.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

## **CONTINUE TO BE GENEROUS**

<sup>19</sup> When people around us care only about themselves, it can be difficult to continue to be generous. But Jesus reminded us that the two greatest commandments are to love Jehovah with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Mark 12:28-31) We have learned in this article that those who love Jehovah

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18. What do many researchers say about being generous?

19, 20. Why do you want to be generous?

imitate him. Jehovah and Jesus are both generous. They encourage us to follow their example, because they know that this will make us truly happy. If we are generous in what we do for God and for our neighbor, we will honor Jehovah and we will benefit ourselves and others.

<sup>20</sup> Certainly you are already doing your best to be generous and to help others, especially your brothers and sisters. (Galatians 6:10) If you continue to do so, people will be grateful and love you, and you will be happy. The Bible says: “The generous person will prosper, and whoever refreshes others will himself be refreshed.” (Proverbs 11:25) In our life and ministry, there are many ways we can give unselfishly and be kind and generous. Let us talk about some of these ways in the next article.

## SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

A **generous** person loves others and is truly interested in them. He does not hesitate to give material things, but he also uses his time and his energy to help them



# Work With Jehovah Each Day

*“We are God’s fellow workers.”*

—1 CORINTHIANS 3:9.

**WHEN** Jehovah created humans, he wanted them to be his fellow workers. Even though humans today are imperfect, faithful people can still work with Jehovah each day. For example, we are “God’s fellow workers” when we preach the good news of his Kingdom and make disciples. (1 Corinthians 3:5-9) It is

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1. In what ways can we work with Jehovah?

**SONGS:**  
64, 111

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## HOW DO YOU WORK WITH JEHOVAH . . .

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when you help your family and others in the congregation?

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when you are hospitable?

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when you volunteer and when you expand your service?

a very great honor that the almighty Creator has chosen us to do a work that is so important! Still, preaching is not the only way that we work with Jehovah. In this article, we will learn how we also work with him when we help our family and those in the congregation, when we are hospitable, when we help with projects the organization is doing around the world, and when we expand our service to Jehovah.—Colossians 3:23.

<sup>2</sup> As we study this article, it is important for us to remember that everyone is different. Our age, health, circumstances, and abilities are not the same. So do not compare what you can do for Jehovah with what others can do. The apostle Paul said: “Let each one examine his own actions, and then he will have cause for rejoicing in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person.”—Galatians 6:4.

## **HELP YOUR FAMILY AND OTHERS IN THE CONGREGATION**

<sup>3</sup> Jehovah expects us to care for our families.

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2. Why should we never compare what we do for Jehovah with what others do?

3. Why can we say that everyone who cares for his family is working with God?

For example, you may have to earn money for the needs of your family. Many mothers have to stay home to be with their young children. And when our parents cannot take care of themselves, we may have to take care of them. These are necessary things. The Bible says: “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.” (1 Timothy 5:8) If you have family responsibilities, you may not be doing as much for Jehovah as you would like to do. But do not be discouraged! Jehovah is pleased when you provide for your family.—1 Corinthians 10:31.

<sup>4</sup> Christian parents can work with Jehovah by helping their children to have goals in Jehovah’s service. Many parents have done this. As a result, their sons and daughters later decided to serve Jehovah full-time, even far away from home. Some are missionaries, others pioneer where there is a great need for publishers, and others serve at Bethel. Of course, when the children are far away, parents cannot spend as much time with them as

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4. How can parents put Kingdom interests first, and what happens when they do?

they would like to. But they unselfishly encourage their children to continue serving Jehovah wherever they are. Why? Because they are very happy that their children are putting Jehovah first in their life. (3 John 4) Many of those parents feel like Hannah, who said that she “lent” her son Samuel to Jehovah. They feel it is a great honor to work with Jehovah in this way.—1 Samuel 1:28.

<sup>5</sup> If you do not have urgent family responsibilities, can you help brothers or sisters who are sick or elderly or who have other needs? Or can you help those who take care of them? Look for those in your congregation who may need such help. For example, maybe there is a sister who is taking care of her elderly parent. Could you spend time with her parent so that she can give attention to other matters? Or maybe you could help someone by offering to take him to the meetings, to go shopping, or to visit someone in the hospital. When you do that, you might be working with Jehovah to answer a prayer.—Read **1 Corinthians 10:24**.

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5. How can you help brothers and sisters in your congregation? (See opening picture.)

## BE HOSPITABLE

<sup>6</sup> God’s fellow workers are known for being hospitable. In the Bible, the Greek word used for “hospitality” means “kindness to strangers.” (Hebrews 13:2; footnote) In God’s Word, we can read about examples that teach us how we can show this kindness. (Genesis 18:1-5) We can and should help others whenever we have an opportunity to do so, whether they are “related to us in the faith” or not. —Galatians 6:10.

<sup>7</sup> Can you work with Jehovah by being hospitable to full-time servants who need a place to stay? (Read 3 John 5, 8.) When we do so, they benefit and so do we. The Bible calls that “an interchange of encouragement.” (Romans 1:11, 12) Consider the experience of Olaf. When he was young, a single circuit overseer visited his congregation and needed a place to stay, but nobody in the congregation could help him. Olaf asked his parents, who were not Witnesses, if the circuit overseer could stay in their home. They said yes but told Olaf he would have to sleep on the couch. That is what Olaf

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6. How can we be hospitable?

7. What are the benefits when you are hospitable to full-time servants?

did, and he did not regret it. He had a wonderful week with the circuit overseer! Early each morning they got up and discussed many interesting topics while they ate breakfast. The circuit overseer encouraged Olaf so much that he decided to start serving Jehovah full-time. For the past 40 years, Olaf has served as a missionary in several countries.

<sup>8</sup> We can show love to strangers in many ways, even if they are not grateful at first. For example, a sister in Spain studied the Bible with Yesica, a woman from Ecuador. One day during the Bible study, Yesica could not stop crying. So the sister asked her why. Yesica said that before she came to Spain, she was very poor. One day she did not have any food to give to her daughter, only water. Yesica prayed for help while she tried to put her baby to sleep. Soon after, two Witnesses visited Yesica and gave her a magazine. But she was rude to them and tore up the magazine, saying: “Is this the food you want me to give to my daughter?” The sisters tried to comfort her, but Yesica did not listen. Later, the sisters left a basket of food at her door. Now, during the study, she was crying because she

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8. Why should we be kind even if others are not grateful at first? Give an example.

realized that she had ignored God's answer to her prayer. But Yesica was determined to serve Jehovah. Clearly, good results came from the generosity of those sisters.—Ecclesiastes 11:1, 6.

## **VOLUNTEER TO WORK ON PROJECTS FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

<sup>9</sup> In the past, the Israelites had many different opportunities to volunteer. (Exodus 36:2; 1 Chronicles 29:5; Nehemiah 11:2) Today, you also have many opportunities to volunteer your time, material things, and skills to help your brothers and sisters. When you do so, you will be very joyful and Jehovah will bless you.

<sup>10</sup> God's Word encourages men in the congregation to work with Jehovah by serving others as ministerial servants and elders. (1 Timothy 3:1, 8, 9; 1 Peter 5:2, 3) Those who do this want to help others in practical ways as well as in their worship. (Acts 6:1-4) Have the elders asked you to be an attendant or to help with literature, territories, maintenance, or something else? Brothers who help in these ways say that they enjoy it very much.

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**9, 10.** (a) What were some opportunities the Israelites had to volunteer? (b) In what ways can brothers help in the congregation today?

<sup>11</sup> Those who volunteer to work on construction projects often make new friends. One sister named Margie has worked on Kingdom Hall construction projects for 18 years. On these projects, she has taken an interest in younger sisters and helped to train them. She says that this is an excellent way for volunteers to encourage one another. (Romans 1:12) In fact, when she experienced difficult times in her life, the friends she has made on these projects encouraged her. Have you ever volunteered for a construction project? You can work on a project even if you do not have a particular skill.

<sup>12</sup> We can also work with Jehovah by helping our brothers after a disaster. For example, we can donate money. (John 13:34, 35; Acts 11:27-30) Another way we can help is by cleaning up or repairing damage after the disaster. Gabriela, a sister from Poland whose house was badly damaged by a flood, was so glad to see brothers from nearby congregations come to help her. When she thinks about that experience, she says that she does not worry about all the material things she lost, but instead she focuses on what she gained. She says:

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11. How has one sister benefited from working on construction projects?

12. How can you help after a disaster?



Those who volunteer to work on projects for the organization often make new friends

(See paragraph 11)

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**“This experience reassured me that being a part of the Christian congregation is a unique privilege as well as a source of joy and happiness.” Many who receive help after a disaster say that they feel the same way. And those who work with Jehovah to help these brothers feel very happy and satisfied. —Read Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7.**

**<sup>13</sup> A sister named Stephanie and other publishers in her area worked with God by helping Witnesses who fled to the United States because of war in their country. They helped these refugees**

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**13. How do we strengthen our love for Jehovah when we volunteer? Give an example.**

to find homes and get furniture. She says: “We were moved by their joy and appreciation as they experienced the love of their worldwide brotherhood. The families think that we have helped them, but in reality, they have helped us much more. The love, unity, faith, and reliance on Jehovah that we have witnessed have truly strengthened our love for Jehovah, and this has given us a deeper appreciation for all that we receive through his organization.”

## **EXPAND YOUR SERVICE TO JEHOVAH**

<sup>14</sup> Would you like to work with Jehovah even more? Would you be willing to move where more publishers are needed? Of course, we do not have to move far away to be generous. But there are some brothers and sisters who can. They have an attitude similar to that of the prophet Isaiah. When Jehovah asked, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” he said: “Here I am! Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8) Are you willing and able to help Jehovah’s organization? What are some ways you can help?

<sup>15</sup> Jesus said about preaching and making disciples: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few.

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**14, 15.** (a) What attitude did the prophet Isaiah have? (b) How can Christians imitate Isaiah’s attitude?

Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37, 38) Can you serve as a pioneer in a place where more publishers are needed? Or can you help someone else to do so? Many brothers and sisters feel that the best way to show their love for God and their neighbor is to pioneer where more publishers are needed. Can you think of other ways to do more in your service? If you do so, you will be very happy.

<sup>16</sup> Are you willing to serve at Bethel or help with construction projects, either as a temporary worker or for one or more days a week? Jehovah’s organization always needs people who are willing to serve wherever they are needed and who will do whatever they are asked to do even if they have experience in a different type of work. Jehovah values everyone who is willing to make sacrifices and serve wherever there is a need.—Psalm 110:3.

<sup>17</sup> Would you like to have more training so that you can serve Jehovah more fully? Perhaps you could apply for the School for Kingdom Evangelizers. This school trains mature brothers and sisters who are already serving Jehovah full-time, so that

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**16, 17.** What are some other ways you can expand your service to Jehovah?

Jehovah's organization can use them to do more. Those who attend this school have to be willing to serve wherever they are sent. Would you be willing to do more for Jehovah in this way?—1 Corinthians 9:23.

<sup>18</sup> Because we are Jehovah's people, we are generous, good, kind, and loving. We care about others each and every day. This brings us joy, peace, and happiness. (Galatians 5:22, 23) No matter what your circumstances are, you will be happy as long as you imitate Jehovah's generous personality and are one of his precious fellow workers! —Proverbs 3:9, 10.

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18. What are the benefits of working with Jehovah each day?

## SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

We **work with Jehovah** when we allow Jehovah to use us to show his generosity and his love to others. We also use what he has given us to help others know him and serve him

# PATIENCE

## Endurance With a Purpose

LOVE  
JOY  
PEACE  
**PATIENCE**  
KINDNESS  
GOODNESS  
FAITH  
MILDNESS  
SELF-CONTROL

BECAUSE life has become so difficult in these “last days,” we need patience more than ever before. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Many people around us are not patient. They are selfish, they like to argue, and they have no self-control. So we need to ask ourselves: ‘Have I become impatient like the people around me? What does it mean to be truly patient? What can I do to make patience a part of my personality?’

### WHAT IS PATIENCE?

What does the word “patience” mean as it is used in the Bible? It means more than simply putting up with a problem. A patient person endures with a purpose, that is, he hopes that things will get better. He does not think only of himself, but he also

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cares about the feelings of others, even those who may have irritated or mistreated him. He continues to hope that their relationship will improve. It is not surprising that the Bible says that patience results from love.\* (See footnote.) (1 Corinthians 13:4) Patience is also part of “the fruitage of the spirit.” (Galatians 5:22, 23) So, what do we need to do to be truly patient?

## **HOW TO BECOME PATIENT**

To become patient we need to pray for the help of Jehovah’s spirit, which he gives to those who trust in him. (Luke 11:13) That spirit is very powerful, but we still need to act according to our prayers. (Psalm 86:10, 11) This means that we must do our best to show patience each day and make it a part of our personality. But sometimes we may fail. What can help us?

We need to study and imitate the perfect example of Jesus. When the apostle Paul talked about “the new personality,” which includes patience, he encouraged us: “Let the peace of the Christ control

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\* The quality of love was discussed in the first of this series of nine articles on the fruitage of God’s holy spirit.

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your hearts.” (Colossians 3:10, 12, 15, footnote) To do so, we have to follow Jesus’ example and have complete trust that at the right time, God will correct matters. If we have that trust, we will not lose our patience, no matter what is happening around us.—John 14:27; 16:33.

We all want the new world to come as soon as possible. But we learn to be more patient when we think about how patient Jehovah has been with us. The Bible assures us: “Jehovah is not slow concerning his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire anyone to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) So when we think about Jehovah’s patience with us, we will also be more patient with others. (Romans 2:4) What are some situations where we need to be patient?

## **SITUATIONS WHERE WE NEED PATIENCE**

There are many situations in our everyday life where we need patience. For example, it takes patience not to interrupt others if we feel we have something important to say. (James 1:19) We also need patience when someone irritates us. Instead

of reacting impatiently, it is good to remember how Jehovah and Jesus react to **our** weak points. They do not focus on the many little things we do wrong. Rather, they see the good qualities we have and patiently give us time to improve.—1 Timothy 1:16; 1 Peter 3:12.

We also need patience when someone tells us that we said or did something wrong. Perhaps our first reaction is to be offended and defend ourselves. But God’s Word tells us to react in a different way. It says: “Better to be patient than to be



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haughty in spirit. Do not be quick to take offense, for the taking of offense is the mark of a fool.” (Ecclesiastes 7:8, 9, footnote) So even if an accusation is completely false, we need to be patient and think carefully before we react. That is what Jesus did when others wrongly accused him.—Matthew 11:19.

Parents especially need to be patient when they have to help their children to correct their attitude or avoid bad desires. Take the example of Mattias, who serves in Bethel in Scandinavia. When Mattias was a teenager, his schoolmates kept making fun of him because of his beliefs. At first, his parents did not know this was happening. But then they saw that he was beginning to doubt his beliefs. Gillis, Mattias’ father, says that he and his wife needed a lot of patience in this situation. Mattias would ask questions such as: “Who is God? What if the Bible is not God’s Word? How do we know that it is actually God who wants this or that from us?” He would also ask his father: “Why am I to be judged if I don’t feel and believe as you do?”

Gillis explains: “Sometimes our son’s questions were expressed in anger, not against his mother or me, but against the truth, which he felt made life so

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difficult for him.” How did Gillis help his son? “My son and I would sit and talk for hours.” Usually, Gillis just listened to Mattias and asked him questions to try to understand his feelings and opinions. Sometimes Gillis explained something to his son and told him to think about it for a day or so before they talked about it again. At other times, Gillis would say that he himself needed a few days to think about something his son had said. Through these regular conversations, Mattias began to understand the meaning of the ransom and to understand that Jehovah loves us and has the right to rule over us. His father says: “It took time, and it was often difficult, but slowly, love for Jehovah grew in his heart. My wife and I are so happy that our patient efforts to help our son through his teenage years paid off and reached his heart.”

While Gillis and his wife patiently helped their son, they trusted that Jehovah would help them. Gillis says: “I often told Mattias that our deep love for him moved his mother and me to pray even more intensely that Jehovah would help him to understand.” These parents are truly happy that they were patient and did not give up!



We also need patience when we are taking care of a family member or a friend who has an illness that lasts for a long time. Take the example of Ellen\* (see footnote), who also lives in Scandinavia.

About eight years ago, Ellen's husband had two strokes that damaged his brain. Because of that, he is no longer able to feel happiness, sadness, or pity. This situation is extremely difficult for Ellen. She says: "It has taken a lot of patience and many prayers." She adds: "My favorite scripture that brings me comfort is Philippians 4:13, which

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\* Name has been changed.

says: ‘For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.’” With Jehovah’s power and support, Ellen copes with the situation patiently.—Psalm 62:5, 6.

## **IMITATE JEHOVAH’S PATIENCE**

Of course, the best example of showing patience is Jehovah himself. (2 Peter 3:15) In the Bible, we often read about Jehovah’s great patience. (Nehemiah 9:30; Isaiah 30:18) Do you remember how Jehovah reacted when Abraham asked Him several questions about His decision to destroy Sodom? Jehovah did not interrupt Abraham. He patiently listened to each of Abraham’s questions and worries. Then, Jehovah showed that he had heard Abraham’s worries and assured him that He would not destroy Sodom even if there were just ten righteous men in that city. (Genesis 18:22-33) Jehovah always listens patiently, and he never overreacts!

Patience is a very important part of the new personality that all Christians must have. If we do our best to become truly patient, we honor our caring and patient Father, Jehovah, and we will be among “those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”—Hebrews 6:10-12.

# APPOINTED MEN LEARN FROM TIMOTHY



LAST year, thousands of brothers all over the world were appointed as elders and ministerial servants. If you are one of them, surely you are happy that you can serve Jehovah and your brothers in this new way.

It is normal, though, if you also feel a little anxious. Jason, a young elder, says: “When I was first appointed, I felt quite overwhelmed by my new responsibilities.” Moses and Jeremiah felt that they were not qualified when they received new assignments from Jehovah. (Exodus 4:10; Jeremiah 1:6) If you feel the same way, what can you do to build your confidence and continue to make progress? You can learn much from the example of Timothy.—Acts 16:1-3.

## IMITATE TIMOTHY’S EXAMPLE

Timothy was probably about 20 years old when he started traveling with the apostle Paul. When he first received this invitation, Timothy may have felt that he

was not qualified to teach and counsel others because he was so young. (1 Timothy 4:11, 12; 2 Timothy 1:1, 2, 7) But he continued to make progress, and ten years later Paul said to the Philippians: “I am hoping in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly.” Why did Paul feel this way? He explained: “I have no one else of a disposition like his.”—Philippians 2:19, 20.

Why is Timothy an excellent example for elders? Consider six reasons.

**1. He truly cared about people.** Paul told the brothers in Philippi that Timothy would “genuinely care” for them. (Philippians 2:20) Timothy wanted the brothers to remain close to Jehovah, and he was willing to sacrifice his time and energy to help them.



William, who has been an elder for more than 20 years, always tells newly appointed elders: “Love the brothers. Focus on their needs rather than on the administrative side of things.” Do not be like a bus driver who cares more about arriving at the bus stops on time than about letting passengers get on the bus.

**2. He put Jehovah’s service first.** Paul said that Timothy was different from those who were “seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 2:21) Paul noticed that the brothers around him were too focused on their own lives. Sometimes they put their own interests ahead of serving Jehovah. But not Timothy! As soon as he had the opportunity to do more in God’s service, he reacted like Isaiah, who said: “Here I am! Send me!”—Isaiah 6:8.

How can you be balanced as you take care of your personal needs and the needs of the congregation? First, follow Paul’s advice: “Make sure of the more important things.” (Philippians 1:10) Put Jehovah’s service first. Second, avoid activities that will take too much of your time and energy. Paul told Timothy: “Flee from youthful desires, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace.”—2 Timothy 2:22.

**3. He worked hard in Jehovah’s service.** Paul said about Timothy: “Like a child with a father he slaved with me to advance the good news.” (Philippians

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2:22) Timothy was not lazy. He worked hard together with Paul, and this made their friendship stronger.

There is a lot of work to do in Jehovah’s organization today. This work is truly satisfying and will help you to draw close to your brothers and sisters. So make sure that you always have “plenty to do in the work of the Lord.”—1 Corinthians 15:58.

**4. He applied what he learned.** Paul wrote to Timothy: “You have closely followed my teaching, my course of life, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love, my endurance.” (2 Timothy 3:10) Timothy applied what he learned, so he received even more responsibility.—1 Corinthians 4:17.

Why not find an experienced elder whom you can view as a role model? Tom, who has been an elder for many years, remembers that an experienced elder took a personal interest in him and gave him excellent training. He says: “I regularly asked for and applied his advice. This rapidly built up my confidence.”

**5. He kept training himself.** Paul advised Timothy: “Train yourself with godly devotion as your aim.” (1 Timothy 4:7) Even if an athlete has a coach, he still needs to train himself. Paul urged Timothy: “Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. . . . Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, so that your advancement may be plainly seen by all people.”—1 Timothy 4:13-15.

You too need to keep improving your skills. Be a diligent student of the Bible, and stay up-to-date with the latest direction from the organization. Do not become overconfident. It would be wrong to think that you have so much experience that you can deal with any situation without doing careful research. Like Timothy, “pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching.”—1 Timothy 4:16.

**6. He relied on Jehovah’s spirit.** When speaking of Timothy’s ministry, Paul reminded him: “Guard this



fine trust by means of the holy spirit, which is dwelling in us.” (2 Timothy 1:14) Timothy needed to rely on God’s spirit.

Donald, who has been an elder for many years, says: “Appointed men must cherish their relationship with God. Those who do will go ‘from strength to strength.’ If they pray for God’s spirit and cultivate its fruitage, they will be a real blessing to their brothers.”—Psalm 84:7; 1 Peter 4:11.

## VALUE YOUR ASSIGNMENT

It is encouraging to see new ministerial servants and elders who, like you, continue to make progress in their service to Jehovah. Jason, who was mentioned earlier, says: “During the time that I’ve been an elder, I’ve learned a lot and my confidence has grown. Now I really enjoy my assignment and view it as a wonderful privilege!”

Will you keep making progress? If you follow Timothy’s example, you too will be a blessing to your brothers and sisters.



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