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ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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SEPTEMBER 3-30, 2018



COVER IMAGE:
BULGARIA

This picture shows what it is like to conduct a Bible study in a Bulgarian prison with prisoners who want to learn the truth

PUBLISHERS
2,475

BIBLE STUDIES
2,950

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE (2017)
5,327

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Whose Recognition Do You Seek?

“God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name.”—HEBREWS 6:10.

HOW do you feel when someone you know and respect forgets your name or, even worse, does not recognize you? This can be very discouraging. Why? Because each one of us has a natural desire to be accepted by others. But we want them to do more than just identify who we are. We want them to know what kind of person we are and what we have accomplished.—Numbers 11:16, footnote; Job 31:6.

² But if we are not careful, this natural desire to be appreciated can become distorted. Satan’s world can make us want to be famous and important. When this happens, we do not give our heavenly Father, Jehovah God, the recognition and worship that he deserves.—Revelation 4:11.

1. What natural desire do we all have?
- 2, 3. What can happen to our desire to be appreciated by others? (See opening picture.)

SONGS: 39, 30

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What is the best kind of recognition?

What will strengthen our desire to have Jehovah’s recognition?

How did Jehovah give recognition to Mary and Jesus?

³ In Jesus' day, some religious leaders had the wrong view of recognition. Jesus warned his disciples: "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in robes and who love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the most prominent places at evening meals." He added: "These will receive a more severe judgment." (Luke 20:46, 47, footnote) In contrast, Jesus praised a poor widow who donated two small coins, when probably nobody else noticed what she did. (Luke 21:1-4) Obviously, Jesus' view of recognition was very different from that of others. This article will help us to keep the right view of recognition, the view that Jehovah God wants us to have.

THE BEST KIND OF RECOGNITION

⁴ What is the best kind of recognition? It is not the attention that many people try to get by means of higher education, success in business, or fame in the entertainment world. Paul explained what it is when he said: "Now that you have come to know God or, rather, have **come to be known by God**, how is it that you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elementary things and want to slave for them over again?" (Galatians 4:9) It is a wonderful privilege to "be known by God," the Supreme Ruler of the universe! Jehovah knows who we are, he loves us, and he wants us to be close to him. Jehovah created us so that we

can be his friends.—Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.

⁵ We know that Moses was a friend of Jehovah. When he pleaded with Jehovah: "Make me know your ways," Jehovah replied: "I will also do this thing that you request, because you have found favor in my eyes and I know you by name." (Exodus 33:12-17) Jehovah can also know **us** personally. But what must we do to become Jehovah's friend? We must love him and dedicate our life to him.—**Read 1 Corinthians 8:3.**

⁶ However, we need to keep our precious friendship with our heavenly Father. Like the early Christians in Galatia, we must stop slaving for "the weak and beggarly elementary things" of this world, including the success and fame it offers. (Galatians 4:9) Those Christians in Galatia had already come to know God, and God already knew them. But Paul said that these very same brothers were "turning back again" to empty things. So in other words, he was asking them: 'Why did you turn back and start slaving for the same foolish and useless things again?'

⁷ Could the same thing happen to us? Yes, it could. Like Paul, when we came into the truth, we may have given up fame and success in Satan's world. (**Read Philippians 3:7, 8.**) Maybe we gave up scholarships, good jobs, or opportunities to make lots of money. Or

5. What must we do to be known by God?

6, 7. What could cause us to lose our friendship with Jehovah?

4. What is the best kind of recognition, and why?

maybe we could have become famous or wealthy because we are talented in music or sports. But we rejected all those opportunities. (Hebrews 11:24-27) It would be very unwise to regret those good decisions and to feel that our lives would have been better if we had run after those things! Such an attitude could make us go back to the things of this world, the things that we had already decided were “weak and beggarly.”*—See footnote.

STRENGTHEN YOUR DESIRE TO HAVE JEHOVAH’S RECOGNITION

⁸ How can our desire for Jehovah’s recognition grow so strong that we will not want the world’s recognition? We need to focus on two important truths. First, **Jehovah always gives recognition to those who serve him faithfully.** (Read Hebrews 6:10; 11:6) Jehovah views every one of his faithful servants as precious, so he feels that it would be “unrighteous” to ignore any of them. Jehovah always knows “those who belong to him.” (2 Timothy 2:19) He is “aware of the way of the righteous” and knows how to save them.—Psalm 1:6; 2 Peter 2:9.

⁹ At times, Jehovah has shown his approval of his people in very special ways. (2 Chronicles 20:20, 29) For ex-

* Other Bible translations use the words “useless,” “bankrupt,” “destitute,” and “miserable” instead of “beggarly.”

8. What will strengthen our desire to have Jehovah’s recognition?

9. Give examples of how Jehovah has shown his approval of his people.

ample, think about the way Jehovah saved his people at the Red Sea when Pharaoh’s powerful army chased after them. (Exodus 14:21-30; Psalm 106:9-11) This event was so amazing that people in that part of the world were still talking about it 40 years later. (Joshua 2:9-11) It is really encouraging for us to remember how Jehovah loved his people and used his power to save them in the past, because soon Gog of Magog will attack us. (Ezekiel 38:8-12) At that time, we will be very happy that we looked for the approval of God and not of the world.

Sometimes Jehovah rewards his servants in unexpected ways

¹⁰ The second truth we must focus on is that **Jehovah may give us recognition in ways we may never expect.** If people do good things just to be praised by others, Jehovah will not reward them. Why not? Because, as Jesus said, when others praise them, that is their reward. (Read Matthew 6:1-5.) On the other hand, Jehovah “looks on in secret” at those who are not honored for the good they do to others. He notices what they do, and he rewards, or blesses, them. And sometimes Jehovah rewards his servants in unexpected ways. Let us discuss some examples.

10. What other truth must we focus on?

JEHOVAH GAVE A HUMBLE YOUNG WOMAN UNEXPECTED RECOGNITION

¹¹ Jehovah chose a humble young woman named Mary to be the mother of his Son, Jesus. Mary lived in a small city called Nazareth, far away from Jerusalem and its beautiful temple. **(Read Luke 1:26-33.)** Why did Jehovah choose Mary? The angel Gabriel told her that she had “found favor with God.” We can see that she was a very close friend of Jehovah from what she later told her relative Elizabeth. (Luke 1:46-55) Jehovah had been watching Mary and gave her this unexpected blessing because she was faithful to him.

¹² When Jesus was born, whom did Jehovah tell about his birth? Not any of the important officials or rulers in

Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Instead, he sent angels to humble shepherds who were caring for sheep in the fields outside Bethlehem. (Luke 2:8-14) Then, these shepherds visited the newborn baby. (Luke 2:15-17) Mary and Joseph must have been very surprised to see Jesus honored in such a way. Jehovah’s way of doing things is different from the way the Devil does things. When Satan sent astrologers to visit Jesus and his parents, everyone in Jerusalem learned about Jesus’ birth, and this caused a lot of trouble. (Matthew 2:3) As a result, many innocent children were later killed.—Matthew 2:16.

¹³ Jehovah’s Law to Israel said that 40 days after giving birth to a son, a mother had to offer a sacrifice to Jehovah. So Mary traveled with Joseph and Jesus from Bethlehem about nine kilometers (six miles) to the temple in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:22-24) On the way, Mary may have wondered if the priest

-
11. How did Jehovah give recognition to Mary?
12, 13. How was Jesus honored when he was born and when Mary took him to the temple 40 days later?



would do something special to honor Jesus. Jesus was honored, but in a way that Mary may not have expected. Jehovah chose Simeon, a “righteous and devout” man, and the prophetess Anna, an 84-year-old widow, to announce that Jesus would become the promised Messiah, or Christ.—Luke 2: 25-38.

¹⁴ Did Jehovah continue to give recognition to Mary because she faithfully raised and cared for Jesus? Yes, he did. God made sure that some of the things that Mary said and did were recorded in the Bible. It seems that Mary was not able to travel with Jesus during the three and a half years that he preached. Perhaps because she was a widow, she had to stay in Nazareth. So she missed out on many beautiful experiences that others had. But she was there with Jesus when he died. (John 19:26) Later, Mary was in Jerusalem

14. How did Jehovah reward Mary?

with Jesus’ disciples before they received holy spirit at Pentecost. (Acts 1: 13, 14) She was likely anointed along with the other disciples. If so, it means that she received the opportunity to be with Jesus in heaven forever. That is certainly a beautiful reward for her faithful service!

JEHOVAH GAVE RECOGNITION TO HIS SON

¹⁵ Jesus did not want honor from the religious or political leaders. But three times, Jehovah spoke directly from heaven, thus letting his Son know that he loved him. That must have encouraged Jesus very much! Just after Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, Jehovah said: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.” (Matthew 3:17) It seems that John the Baptist was the only other person who heard those words. Then, about

15. How did Jehovah show his approval of Jesus when he was on earth?



What do you learn from the way Jehovah gave recognition to his Son?
(See paragraphs 15-17)

a year before Jesus' death, three of his apostles heard Jehovah say about Jesus: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved. Listen to him." (Matthew 17:5) Finally, just a few days before Jesus' death, Jehovah again spoke to his Son from heaven.—John 12:28.

¹⁶ Jesus knew that people would call him a blasphemer and that he would die a shameful death. Still, he prayed that God's will be done and not his. (Matthew 26:39, 42) "He endured a torture stake, despising shame," because he wanted his Father's recognition, not the world's. (Hebrews 12:2) How did Jehovah give that recognition to Jesus?

¹⁷ When Jesus was on earth, he prayed to have the glory that he had before, when he was in heaven with his Father. (John 17:5) The Bible does not say anywhere that Jesus hoped to get more than that. He did not expect a special reward for doing Jehovah's will on earth. But what did Jehovah do? He honored Jesus in an unexpected way. When Jehovah resurrected Jesus, he

16, 17. How did Jehovah honor Jesus in an unexpected way?

gave him "a superior position" in heaven. He also gave Jesus immortal spirit life, something that no one else had received before!*

 (See footnote.) (Philippians 2:9; 1 Timothy 6:16) What an amazing way for Jehovah to reward Jesus for his faithful service!

¹⁸ What will help us to look for Jehovah's approval and not the world's? We should focus on the fact that Jehovah **always** gives recognition to his faithful servants and that he often rewards them in **unexpected ways**. We can only try to imagine how Jehovah will bless us in the future! But for now, while we endure problems and difficulties in this wicked world, we must remember that this world is passing away. So any recognition from it will also pass away. (1 John 2:17) Our loving Father, Jehovah, on the other hand, will never forget our work and the love we show for his name, because he "is not unrighteous." (Hebrews 6:10) He will certainly show that he approves of us, perhaps in ways that we have never even thought of!

* This reward may have been unexpected, because immortality is not mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures.

18. What will help us to look for Jehovah's approval and not the world's?

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

Recognition from Jehovah:

Jehovah recognizes us when he honors us, blesses us, saves us, or rewards us. In all these cases, being recognized by Jehovah means that Jehovah approves of us and views us as his friends



Where Are Your Eyes Looking?

“To you I raise my eyes, you who are enthroned in the heavens.”—PSALM 123:1.

WE ARE living in “critical times” that are “hard to deal with.” (2 Timothy 3:1) And life is going to become even more difficult before Jehovah destroys this wicked world and brings true peace to the earth. For this reason, we should ask ourselves, ‘Whom do I look to for help and direction?’ We may immediately say, “To Jehovah,” and that is the best answer.

² What does it mean to look to Jehovah? And how can we make sure that we keep looking to him when we have problems? A long time ago, one Bible writer explained how much we need to look to Jehovah when we need help. **(Read Psalm 123:1-4.)** He said that when we look to Jehovah, we are like a servant who looks to his master. How so? A servant looks to, or relies on, his master

SONGS: 143, 124

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What does it mean to look to Jehovah?

Why did Moses lose his privilege of entering the Promised Land?

What lessons do we learn from what happened to Moses?

1, 2. What does it mean to look to Jehovah?

to give him food and to protect him. But he must also watch his master constantly to understand what his master wants him to do, and then he must do it. In a similar way, we must study God's Word carefully every day to understand what Jehovah wants us to do, and then we must do it. Then we can be sure that Jehovah will help us when we need help.—Ephesians 5:17.

³ Even though we know that we must always look to Jehovah, sometimes we may become distracted. That is exactly what happened to Jesus' close friend Martha. She became "distracted with attending to many duties." (Luke 10:40-42) If a faithful person such as Martha became distracted even though Jesus was right there with her, we should not be surprised that we could become distracted too. So, what can distract us from looking to Jehovah? In this article, we will discuss how we could be distracted by what others do. And we will learn how to keep looking to Jehovah.

A FAITHFUL MAN LOST A PRIVILEGE

⁴ Moses certainly looked to Jehovah for direction. The Bible tells us that "he continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible." (**Read Hebrews 11:24-27.**) It also says that "there has never again arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom Jehovah knew face-

to-face." (Deuteronomy 34:10) But even though Moses was a close friend of Jehovah, he lost the privilege of entering the Promised Land. (Numbers 20:12) What went wrong?

⁵ Less than two months after the Israelites left Egypt, and before they even arrived at Mount Sinai, something serious happened. The people started to complain because there was no water. They began to murmur against Moses and became so angry that "Moses cried out to Jehovah: 'What should I do with this people? A little longer and they will stone me!'" (Exodus 17:4) Jehovah gave Moses clear instructions. Jehovah told him to take his rod and hit the rock in Horeb. The Bible says: "Moses did so before the eyes of the elders of Israel." Then water came out, the Israelites had plenty to drink, and the problem was solved.—Exodus 17:5, 6.

⁶ The Bible tells us that Moses named the place Massah, which means "Testing," and Meribah, which means "Quarreling." Why? "Because of the quarreling of the Israelites and because they put Jehovah to the test by saying: 'Is Jehovah in our midst or not?'"—Exodus 17:7.

⁷ How did Jehovah feel about what happened at Meribah? He felt that the Israelites had rebelled against him and his authority, not just against Moses. (**Read Psalm 95:8, 9.**) What the Isra-

3. What can distract us from looking to Jehovah?

4. Why might we be surprised that Moses lost the privilege of entering the Promised Land?

5-7. What happened soon after the Israelites left Egypt, and what did Moses do?

elites did was very wrong. But Moses did the right thing. He looked to Jehovah and then carefully followed his instructions.

⁸ However, what happened in a similar situation about 40 years later? The

Moses did not obey the new directions Jehovah had given him

Israelites were almost at the end of their journey through the wilderness. They arrived at a place near Kadesh, close to the border of the Promised Land. This place also became known as Meribah.* (See footnote.) Why? Because the Israelites complained again that there was no water. (Numbers 20:1-5) But this time, Moses made a serious mistake.

⁹ What did Moses do when the people rebelled? Again, he looked to Jehovah for direction. But this time Jehovah did not tell Moses to **hit** the rock. He told Moses to take his rod, bring the people near the rock, and then **speak** to the rock. (Numbers 20:6-8)

* This Meribah was different from the Meribah near Rephidim that was also called Massah. However, both places were called Meribah because the Israelites quarreled, or complained, there.—See the map in Appendix B3 in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

8. What happened near the end of the Israelites' journey through the wilderness?

9. What instructions did Jehovah give to Moses, but what did Moses do? (See opening picture.)

Did Moses do that? No. He was so frustrated and angry that he shouted at the people: “Hear, now, you rebels! Must we bring out water for you from this crag?” Then he hit the crag, or rock, not just once, but twice.—Numbers 20:10, 11.

¹⁰ Jehovah became very angry with Moses. (Deuteronomy 1:37; 3:26) Why did Jehovah react in that way? One reason could be that Moses did not obey the new directions Jehovah had given him.

¹¹ There may be another reason why Jehovah was angry. The massive rocks at the first Meribah are solid granite. No matter how hard someone hits granite, no one expects that water will come out. But the rocks at the second Meribah are very different. Most of them are a kind of rock called limestone. Because limestone is a softer kind of rock, water often seeps into it and collects underground. Then, people can get this water by making a hole in the rock. So when Moses hit the rock instead of speaking to it, could it be that the Israelites thought the water came out naturally and not because Jehovah performed a miracle?* (See footnote.) We cannot say for sure.

* One Bible scholar says that according to a Jewish tradition, the rebels claimed that this was no miracle because Moses knew that this rock had water in it. So they wanted him to repeat the miracle on another rock. Of course, this is only a tradition.

10. How did Jehovah react to what Moses did?

11. By hitting the rock, why might Moses have made the Israelites think that Jehovah did not perform a miracle?

HOW MOSES REBELLED

¹² There may be still another reason why Jehovah was so angry with Moses and Aaron. Moses told the people: “Must **we** bring out water for you from this crag?” When Moses said “we,” he was likely referring to himself and Aaron. What Moses said was very disrespectful because he did not give Jehovah all the credit for that miracle. Psalm 106:32, 33 says: “They provoked Him at the waters of Meribah, and it went badly for Moses because of them. They embittered his spirit, and he **spoke rashly with his lips.**”^{*} (See footnote.) (Numbers 27:14) Moses did not give Jehovah the honor He deserved. Jehovah told Moses and Aaron: “You both rebelled against my order.” (Numbers 20:24) That was a very serious sin!

We must continue
to look to Jehovah
and always obey him

¹³ Jehovah expected more of Moses and Aaron because they were leading His people. (Luke 12:48) In the past, Jehovah had not allowed an entire generation of Israelites to go into the

^{*} See *The Watchtower*, October 15, 1987, “Questions From Readers.”

12. What may be another reason why Jehovah was angry with Moses and Aaron?

13. Why was the way Jehovah punished Moses right and fair?

Promised Land because they had rebelled against him. (Numbers 14:26-30, 34) So it was right and fair that when Moses rebelled, Jehovah punished him in the same way. Just like the other rebels, Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land.

THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM

¹⁴ What caused Moses to rebel against Jehovah? Notice again what Psalm 106:32, 33 says: “They provoked Him at the waters of Meribah, and it went badly for Moses because of them. They **embittered his spirit**, and he spoke rashly with his lips.” So even though the Israelites rebelled against Jehovah, it was Moses who became embittered, or angry. He did not show self-control but spoke without thinking about the consequences.

¹⁵ Moses stopped looking to Jehovah because he allowed the actions of others to distract him. The first time the people complained about water, Moses did what was right. (Exodus 7:6) But maybe he became tired and frustrated because the Israelites had rebelled for many years. It could be that Moses was now thinking only about his own feelings instead of how he could glorify Jehovah.

¹⁶ If a faithful prophet such as Moses could become distracted and sin, the same thing could easily happen to us. Moses was about to enter the Prom-

14, 15. What caused Moses to rebel against Jehovah?

16. Why should we think about what Moses did?

ised Land, and we are about to enter the new world. (2 Peter 3:13) We certainly do not want to lose that special privilege. But to enter the new world, we must continue to look to Jehovah and always obey him. (1 John 2:17) What lessons can we learn from Moses' mistake?

DO NOT LET WHAT OTHERS DO DISTRACT YOU

17 Do not lose your self-control when you are frustrated. Sometimes we experience the same problems

17. How can we avoid losing our self-control when we are frustrated?

over and over again. But the Bible says: "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due time we will reap if we do not tire out." (Galatians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:13) When something or someone frustrates us again and again, do we think before we speak? Do we control our temper? (Proverbs 10:19; 17:27; Matthew 5:22) When others provoke us, we need to learn to "yield place to the wrath," or allow room for Jehovah to express his anger. **(Read Romans 12:17-21.)** What does that mean? Instead of becoming angry, we patiently wait for Jehovah to do something about our

What lesson should we learn from the way Moses reacted when others made mistakes?

(See paragraph 19)



problem when he thinks it is necessary. If we tried to get revenge instead of looking to Jehovah, we would be disrespecting him.

¹⁸ Carefully follow the latest directions. Do we faithfully follow the latest directions that Jehovah has given us? We should not keep doing things the way we have always done them in the past just because that is what we are used to doing. Instead, we should be quick to follow any new direction that Jehovah gives us through his organization. (Hebrews 13:17) Also, we must be careful not to “go beyond the things that are written.” (1 Corinthians 4:6) When we follow Jehovah’s directions carefully, we keep looking to him.

¹⁹ Do not allow the mistakes of others to damage your friendship with Jehovah. If we continue to look to Jehovah, we will not damage our friend-

18. What should we remember about following directions?

19. How can we avoid letting the mistakes of others damage our friendship with Jehovah?

ship with him or become angry because of what others do. This is especially important if, like Moses, we have some responsibility in God’s organization. Of course, each of us needs to work hard and obey Jehovah to be saved. (Philippians 2:12) However, the more responsibility we have, the more Jehovah expects of us. (Luke 12:48) But if we really love Jehovah, nothing will stumble us or separate us from his love. —Psalm 119:165; Romans 8:37-39.

²⁰ We live in difficult and challenging times. So it is very important that we keep looking to Jehovah, who is “enthroned in the heavens,” in order to understand what he wants us to do. We should never allow the actions of others to damage our friendship with Jehovah. What happened to Moses teaches us this very important lesson. Instead of overreacting when others make mistakes, let us be determined to “look to Jehovah our God until he shows us favor.”—Psalm 123:1, 2.

20. What should we be determined to do?

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

We **look to Jehovah** when we study his Word carefully to understand what he wants us to do and then faithfully follow all the directions he gives us



“Who Is on Jehovah’s Side?”

“Jehovah your God you should fear, him you should serve, to him you should cling.”—DEUTERONOMY 10:20.

IT IS wise for us to stay close to Jehovah. No one is more powerful, wise, and loving than he is! Of course, we always want to be loyal to him and be on his side. (Psalm 96:4-6) But some who worshipped God failed to do that.

² In this article, we will discuss examples of some who claimed to be on Jehovah’s side but at the same time were doing things that Jehovah hates. The important lessons we learn from their examples can help us to stay loyal to Jehovah.

JEHOVAH EXAMINES OUR HEART

³ For example, think of Cain. He did not worship false gods, but still Jehovah did not accept his worship. Why not? Jehovah saw that there were wicked tendencies in Cain’s heart. (1 John 3:12) Jehovah warned Cain: “If you turn to doing good, will you not be restored to favor? But

1, 2. (a) Why is it wise to be on Jehovah’s side? (b) What will we discuss in this article?

3. Why did Jehovah try to help Cain, and what did He tell him?

SONGS: 28, 32

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How did Cain and Solomon lose Jehovah’s favor?

How did Moses and Aaron show that they were on Jehovah’s side?

How can Jehovah’s mercy and forgiveness help us?

if you do not turn to doing good, sin is crouching at the door, and its craving is to dominate you; but will you get the mastery over it?" (Genesis 4:6, 7) Jehovah was making it clear that if Cain repented and chose to be on God's side, He would be on Cain's side.

⁴ If Cain changed his thinking, Jehovah would accept his worship again. But Cain did not listen to God, and his wrong thinking and selfish desire led him to wrong actions. (James 1:14, 15) When Cain was younger, he may never have imagined that he would oppose Jehovah. But now he ignored God's warning, rebelled against God, and killed his own brother!

⁵ Like Cain, a Christian today might claim to worship Jehovah but actually be doing things that Jehovah hates. (Jude 11) He may be active in the ministry and regular at meetings. But at the same time, he might be allowing immoral fantasies, greedy thoughts, or feelings of hatred to control his thinking. (1 John 2:15-17; 3:15) Such thinking can lead to sinful actions. Other people may not know what we think or do, but Jehovah does. He knows if we are not completely on his side.—**Read Jeremiah 17:9, 10.**

⁶ Even when we make mistakes, Jehovah is not quick to give up on us. If

4. What did Cain do when he had the opportunity to be on Jehovah's side?

5. What kind of thinking could cause us to lose Jehovah's favor?

6. How does Jehovah help us to conquer wrong desires?

we are heading in a dangerous direction, Jehovah invites us: "Return to me, and I will return to you." (Malachi 3:7) Jehovah understands that we have weaknesses that we fight against. But he wants us to be firm and oppose what is bad. (Isaiah 55:7) If we do, he promises that he will help us and give us the strength we need to conquer our wrong desires.—Genesis 4:7.

DO NOT BE FOOLED

⁷ When Solomon was young, he had a good relationship with Jehovah. God made Solomon very wise and gave him the important task of building a beautiful temple in Jerusalem. But Solomon lost his friendship with Jehovah. (1 Kings 3:12; 11:1, 2) God's Law stated that the king should not take "many wives for himself, so that his heart may not go astray." (Deuteronomy 17:17) Solomon disobeyed this law. Eventually, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines! (1 Kings 11:3) Many of these women were foreigners who worshipped false gods. So Solomon also disobeyed God's law against marrying foreign women.—Deuteronomy 7:3, 4.

⁸ Little by little, Solomon lost his love for Jehovah's laws. Eventually, he did really bad things. He built altars to the false goddess Ashtoreth and the false god Chemosh, and then he worshipped these false gods with his

7. How did Solomon lose his friendship with Jehovah?

8. How did Solomon offend Jehovah?



How do the people you spend time with affect your relationship with Jehovah?

(See paragraph 11)

wives. Solomon even built these altars on a mountain just in front of Jerusalem, where he had built Jehovah's temple! (1 Kings 11:5-8; 2 Kings 23:13) Perhaps Solomon fooled himself into thinking that Jehovah would ignore all the bad things he did as long as he offered sacrifices at the temple.

⁹ But Jehovah never ignores sin. The Bible says: "Jehovah became furious at Solomon, because his heart had inclined away from Jehovah." God had tried to help Solomon. Jehovah "had appeared to him twice and had warned him about this very thing, that he

should not go after other gods. But he did not obey what Jehovah had commanded." As a result, he lost God's approval and support. Jehovah did not allow Solomon's descendants to rule over the entire nation of Israel, and they had terrible problems for hundreds of years.—1 Kings 11:9-13.

¹⁰ If we choose friends who do not understand or respect God's standards, they could influence our thinking and harm our friendship with Jehovah. They may be part of the congregation, but they do not have a strong relationship with Jehovah.

9. What happened when Solomon did not listen to God's warnings?

10. What can harm our good relationship with Jehovah?

Or they could be relatives, neighbors, workmates, or schoolmates who do not worship Jehovah. If the people we spend time with do not live by Jehovah's standards, they can influence us so much that we could lose our good relationship with God.

¹¹ **Read 1 Corinthians 15:33.** Most people have some good qualities. And those who do not worship Jehovah may not always do bad things. Maybe you know some people like that. Does this mean that they are good associations? Well, how do they affect your relationship with Jehovah? Do they help you draw closer to God? What is truly important to those people? What do they talk about? Do they mainly talk about fashion, money, gadgets, entertainment, and such things? Are they often critical of others? Do they like to tell dirty jokes? Jesus warned: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Matthew 12:34) If you realize that the people you spend time with are harming your relationship with Jehovah, take action! Limit the amount of time you are with them, and if necessary, end the friendship. —Proverbs 13:20.

JEHOVAH REQUIRES US TO BE LOYAL TO HIM

¹² We can also learn from what happened after Jehovah freed the Israel-

11. What can help us to choose our friends?
12. (a) What did Jehovah tell the Israelites soon after they left Egypt? (b) What did the Israelites say when God asked them to be loyal?

ites from Egypt. As the people gathered in front of Mount Sinai, Jehovah showed himself to them in a dramatic way! They saw a dark cloud, lightning, and smoke, and they heard thunder and a loud noise like a horn. (Exodus 19:16-19) Then they heard Jehovah announce that he is "a God who requires exclusive devotion." He promised that he would be loyal to those who love him and obey his commandments. (**Read Exodus 20:1-6.**) Jehovah was letting the Israelites know that if they stayed on his side, he would be on their side. If you had been in that crowd, how would you have felt when you heard Jehovah's words? You would probably have answered like those Israelites, who said: "All the words that Jehovah has spoken, we are willing to do." (Exodus 24:3) But it was not long before something happened that tested the Israelites' loyalty to God. What was it?

¹³ The Israelites were frightened by the dramatic display of God's power, so Moses went up Mount Sinai and spoke to Jehovah for them. (Exodus 20:18-21) But time went by, and Moses did not come back down to the camp. It seemed that the people were stuck in the wilderness without their leader. What would they do? It may be that the Israelites relied too much on a human leader, Moses. They became anxious and told Aaron: "Make for us a god who will go ahead of us, because we do

13. What tested the Israelites' loyalty?

not know what has happened to this Moses, the man who led us up out of the land of Egypt.”—Exodus 32:1, 2.

¹⁴ The Israelites knew that it was wrong to worship idols. (Exodus 20:3-5) But how quickly they began to worship the golden calf! Even though they disobeyed Jehovah’s commandment, they fooled themselves into thinking that they were still on Jehovah’s side. Aaron even called this calf worship “a festival to Jehovah”! What did Jehovah do? He told Moses that the people had “corrupted themselves” and left the way He “commanded them to go.” Jehovah was so angry that he even thought about destroying the entire nation.—Exodus 32:5-10.

¹⁵ But Jehovah is a merciful God. He decided not to destroy the nation. Instead, he gave the Israelites the chance to show that they wanted to be on his side. (Exodus 32:14) When Moses saw the people shouting, singing, and dancing in front of the idol, he crushed the golden calf and ground it to powder. Then he shouted: “Who is on Jehovah’s side? Come to me!” And “all the Levites gathered around” Moses.—Exodus 32:17-20, 26.

¹⁶ Even though Aaron had made the golden calf, he repented and, along with the rest of the Levites, chose to

be on Jehovah’s side. These loyal ones made it clear that they were not on the side of the sinners. That was a wise choice, because later that day, thousands who worshipped the golden calf died. But those who were on Jehovah’s side survived, and God promised to bless them.—Exodus 32:27-29.

¹⁷ What is the lesson for us? The apostle Paul said: “These things became examples for us,” so that we

Jehovah gave the
Israelites the chance to
show that they wanted
to be on his side

never “become idolaters.” Paul explained that such accounts “were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have come. So let the one who thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:6, 7, 11, 12) As Paul pointed out, even those who worship Jehovah can become involved in doing what is bad. They may even think that Jehovah still approves of them. But just because a person wants to be Jehovah’s friend or claims to be loyal does not always mean that Jehovah actually approves of him.—1 Corinthians 10:1-5.

17. What do we learn from what Paul wrote about the golden calf?

14. What did the Israelites fool themselves into thinking, and how did Jehovah react?

15, 16. How did Moses and Aaron show that they were completely on Jehovah’s side? (See opening picture.)

¹⁸ When Moses did not come down from Sinai as soon as the Israelites expected, they became anxious. If the end of this system has not come as soon as we expected, we too may feel anxious. We may begin to think that the wonderful future Jehovah promises is too far off or is too good to be true, and we may start to focus on what we want instead of what Jehovah wants. If we are not careful, we could drift away from Jehovah and do things that we would never have imagined we would do.

¹⁹ Jehovah requires that we obey him completely and worship only him. (Exodus 20:5) Why does he ask this of us? Because he loves us. If we do not do what Jehovah wants, we will be doing what Satan wants, and that will harm us. Paul stated: “You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons; you cannot be partaking of ‘the table of Jehovah’ and the table of demons.”—1 Corinthians 10:21.

18. What could cause us to drift away from Jehovah, and what would be the consequences?

19. What should we always remember, and why?

STAY CLOSE TO JEHOVAH!

²⁰ Cain, Solomon, and the Israelites all had the opportunity to repent and change their behavior. (Acts 3:19) Clearly, Jehovah is not quick to give up on people just because they make a mistake. Think about how he forgave Aaron. Today, Jehovah gives us loving warnings to protect us from doing what is wrong. He uses the Bible, our publications, and even other Christians. When we pay attention to Jehovah’s warnings, we can be sure that he will show us mercy.

²¹ Jehovah’s undeserved kindness has a purpose. (2 Corinthians 6:1) It gives us an opportunity “to reject ungodliness and worldly desires.” (**Read Titus 2:11-14.**) In this system, there will always be situations that test our loyalty to Jehovah. Be determined to stay completely on Jehovah’s side, and remember that it is “Jehovah your God you should fear, him you should serve,” and “to him you should cling!”—Deuteronomy 10:20.

20. How can Jehovah help us even when we have made a mistake?

21. What should we do when our loyalty to Jehovah is tested?

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

Jehovah’s side:

All humans have to choose whether they will support Jehovah or Satan. We can stay on Jehovah’s side by loving him and obeying his laws. Also, we must hate Satan and reject his thinking



We Belong to Jehovah

“Happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people he has chosen as his own possession.”—PSALM 33:12.

EVERYTHING belongs to Jehovah! He owns “the heavens, even the heavens of the heavens, and the earth with all that is in it.” (Deuteronomy 10:14; Revelation 4:11) Because Jehovah created humans, all of us are his property. (Psalm 100:3) But out of all the people who have ever lived, God has chosen some to belong to him in a special way.

² For example, Psalm 135 described faithful worshippers of Jehovah in ancient Israel as “his special property.” (Psalm 135:4) Also, Hosea prophesied that some non-Israelites would become Jehovah’s people. (Hosea 2: 23) This prophecy was fulfilled when Jehovah began to choose people who were not Israelites to rule in

1. Why can we say that Jehovah owns everything? (See opening picture.)
2. According to the Bible, who have belonged to Jehovah in a special way?

SONGS: 40, 50

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What do we prove when we dedicate ourselves to Jehovah and get baptized?

Why should it be obvious to others that we worship only Jehovah?

Why must we be hospitable, generous, forgiving, and kind to our brothers and sisters?

heaven with Christ. (Acts 10:45; Romans 9:23-26) Those anointed with holy spirit are called “a holy nation.” They are Jehovah’s “special possession.” (1 Peter 2:9, 10) But what about all the faithful Christians today who hope to live forever on earth? Jehovah also calls them “my people” and “my chosen ones.”—Isaiah 65:22.

³ Today, the “little flock,” who hope to live forever in heaven, and the “other sheep,” who hope to live forever on earth, worship Jehovah together as “one flock.” (Luke 12:32; John 10:16) We want to show Jehovah how grateful we are that we have a special relationship with him. In this article, we will discuss how we can express our gratitude to Jehovah for this special honor.

WE DEDICATE OUR LIVES TO JEHOVAH

⁴ We show our gratitude to Jehovah when we dedicate ourselves to him and get baptized. Then all can see that we belong to Jehovah and are willing to obey him. (Hebrews 12:9) Jesus did something similar when he got baptized. Even though he was already part of a nation that was dedicated to Jehovah, he offered himself to Jehovah. It was as if he was saying: “To do your will, O my God, is my desire.”—Psalm 40:7, 8, footnote.

3. (a) Who have a special relationship with Jehovah today? (b) What will we discuss in this article?

4. How can we thank Jehovah for allowing us to have a relationship with him, and how did Jesus do something similar?

⁵ How did Jehovah feel when Jesus got baptized? The Bible says: “After being baptized, Jesus immediately came up from the water; and look! the heavens were opened up, and he saw God’s spirit descending like a dove and coming upon him. Look! Also, a voice from the heavens said: ‘This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.’” (Matthew 3:16, 17) Jesus already belonged to God. But Jehovah was happy when he saw that Jesus was willing to use his life to serve only Him. Jehovah is also pleased when we dedicate our lives to him, and he will bless us.—Psalm 149:4.

⁶ But Jehovah already owns everything! What could we give to him? Imagine a man who has beautiful flowers in his garden. One day his little daughter picks one of the flowers and gives it to him. Even though the flower already belongs to him, the loving father is delighted with the gift. It shows that his daughter loves him. That flower from his daughter is more precious to him than all the other flowers in his garden. In a similar way, Jehovah is delighted when we willingly dedicate our lives to him.—Exodus 34:14.

⁷ **Read Malachi 3:16.** Why is it so important to dedicate your life to Jehovah and get baptized? It is true that

5, 6. (a) What did Jehovah say when Jesus was baptized? (b) What illustration can help us understand how Jehovah feels about our dedication?

7. How did Malachi help us understand how Jehovah feels about those who willingly serve him?

from the moment you began to exist, you already belonged to your Creator, Jehovah. But just think how happy Jehovah will be when you accept him as your Ruler and dedicate yourself to him! (Proverbs 23:15) Jehovah knows those who willingly serve him, and he writes their names in his “book of remembrance.”

⁸ If we want our name to remain in Jehovah’s “book of remembrance,” there is something we must do. Malachi said that we must fear Jehovah and meditate on his name. If we worship anyone or anything else, our name will be removed from Jehovah’s book! —Exodus 32:33; Psalm 69:28.

⁹ So it is not enough for us to promise to do Jehovah’s will and then get baptized. These are things that we do only one time, but worshipping Jehovah is a way of life. Every day, for as long as we live, we must prove by our actions that we obey Jehovah.—1 Peter 4:1, 2.

WE REJECT WORLDLY DESIRES

¹⁰ In the previous article, we learned that Cain, Solomon, and the Israelites claimed to worship Jehovah but were not loyal to him. These examples taught us that it is not enough just to say that we worship Jehovah. We need to hate what is bad and love what is

good. (Romans 12:9) Jehovah says that there would be a clear difference “between a righteous person and a wicked person, between one serving God and one not serving him.”—Malachi 3:18.

¹¹ We are grateful to Jehovah for choosing us to be his people! It should be easy for all to see that we are on Jehovah’s side. (Matthew 5:16; 1 Timothy 4:15) Ask yourself: ‘Can others see

For as long as we live,
we must prove by our
actions that we obey
Jehovah

that I am completely loyal to Jehovah? Am I proud to tell people that I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses?’ Imagine how sad Jehovah would feel if we were ashamed to tell others that we belong to him.—Psalm 119:46; **read Mark 8:38.**

¹² Sadly, even some Witnesses imitate “the spirit of the world.” As a result, they are not very different from those who do not worship Jehovah. (1 Corinthians 2:12) “The spirit of the world” makes people focus on their own selfish desires. (Ephesians 2:3) For example, despite all the counsel that we have received, some choose

8, 9. What does Jehovah ask of those whose names are written in his “book of remembrance”?

10. What clear difference must there be between those who serve Jehovah and those who do not?

11. Why should it be easy for all to see that we worship only Jehovah?

12, 13. How have some made it difficult for others to identify them as Jehovah’s Witnesses?



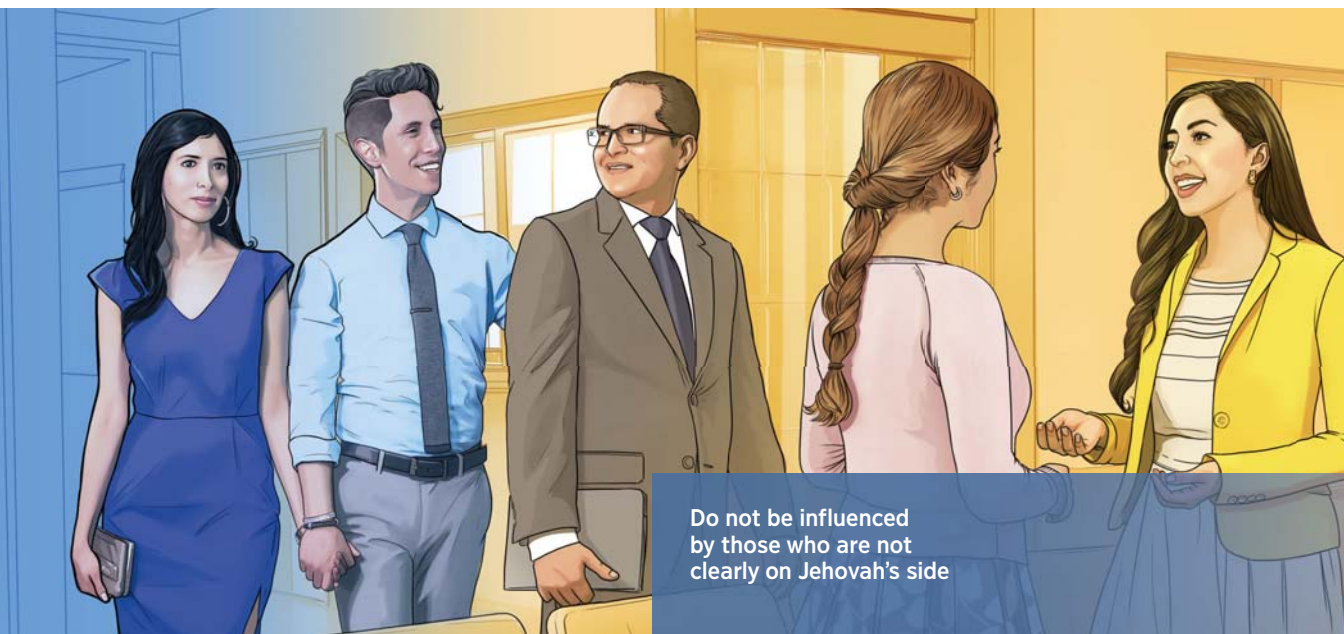
to dress immodestly. They wear tight-fitting and revealing clothing, even to Christian gatherings. Or they choose extreme hairstyles. (1 Timothy 2:9, 10) As a result, it may be difficult for others to know whether they are Jehovah's Witnesses or not.—James 4:4.

¹³ There are other ways that some Witnesses have not been clearly different from the world. For example, at parties, some have danced and behaved in a way that is not acceptable for Christians. Others have posted photos of themselves and comments on social media that reveal their fleshly thinking. They may not have been disciplined in the Christian congregation for a serious sin, but they can be a bad influence on their brothers and sis-

ters who are trying hard to be different from the world.—**Read 1 Peter 2: 11, 12.**

¹⁴ Everything in the world is designed to make us focus on “the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one’s means of life.” (1 John 2:16) We belong to Jehovah, so we are different. We “reject ungodliness and worldly desires,” and we “live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things.” (Titus 2:12) Our whole way of life, including how we talk, eat, drink, dress, and work, should make it clear to everyone that we belong to Jehovah.—**Read 1 Corinthians 10:31, 32.**

14. What must we do to protect our special friendship with Jehovah?



WE “HAVE INTENSE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER”

¹⁵ We show that we value Jehovah’s friendship by the way we treat our brothers and sisters. They belong to Jehovah, just as we do. If we remember this fact, we will always treat them with kindness and love. (1 Thessalonians 5: 15) How important is this? Jesus said to his followers: “By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.”—John 13:35.

¹⁶ An example from the Law of Moses can help us understand how we should treat others in the congregation. In Jehovah’s temple, there were utensils

15. Why should we be kind and loving to other Christians?

16. What do we learn from the Mosaic Law about Jehovah’s love for his people?

that were used exclusively for worship. The Law clearly explained how the Levites should care for those utensils, and anyone who did not follow these instructions would be killed. (Numbers 1:50, 51) If Jehovah cared so much about how people treated the objects that were used in his worship, how much more so does he care about how people treat his dedicated, loyal worshippers! He let us know how precious we are to him when he said: “Whoever touches you touches the pupil of my eye.”—Zechariah 2:8.

¹⁷ Malachi said that Jehovah is “paying attention and listening” to how his people treat one another. (Malachi 3: 16) Jehovah “knows those who belong

17. What is Jehovah “paying attention and listening” to?

to him.” (2 Timothy 2:19) He is very aware of everything we do and say. (Hebrews 4:13) When we are unkind to our brothers and sisters, Jehovah

Jehovah notices when we are hospitable, generous, forgiving, and kind

notices it. But we can be sure that Jehovah also notices when we are hospitable, generous, forgiving, and kind.—Hebrews 13:16; 1 Peter 4:8, 9.

“JEHOVAH WILL NOT FORSAKE HIS PEOPLE”

¹⁸ We want to show Jehovah how grateful we are that we belong to him as his people. We know that when we dedicated our lives to him, it was the wisest choice we could make. Even though we live “in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation,” we can still

18. How can we thank Jehovah for choosing us to be his people?

be “blameless and innocent” and shine “as illuminators in the world.” (Philippians 2:15) So we are determined to avoid doing anything that Jehovah hates. (James 4:7) And we love and respect our brothers and sisters because they also belong to Jehovah.—Romans 12:10.

¹⁹ The Bible promises: “Jehovah will not forsake his people.” (Psalm 94:14) This is a guarantee. No matter what happens, Jehovah will be with us. Even if we die, he will not forget us. (Romans 8:38, 39) “If we live, we live to Jehovah, and if we die, we die to Jehovah. So both if we live and if we die, we belong to Jehovah.” (Romans 14:8) We look forward to the time when Jehovah will bring back to life all his loyal friends who have died. (Matthew 22:32) And even now we enjoy many wonderful gifts from our Father. As the Bible says, “happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people he has chosen as his own possession.”—Psalm 33:12.

19. How does Jehovah reward those who belong to him?

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

We belong to Jehovah:

Jehovah gave us life, so we belong to Jehovah from the moment we begin to exist. But we belong to Jehovah in a special way when we dedicate our lives to him, we get baptized, and then we use our lives to serve him

Cultivate Compassion for “All Sorts of People”

WHEN Jesus taught his disciples how to preach the good news, he warned them that people would not always want to listen to them. (Luke 10:3, 5, 6) The same is true in our ministry. Some people we meet might be rude or even aggressive. And when they react that way, it may be difficult for us to have compassion and want to preach to them.

A compassionate person sees the needs and problems of others, feels sorry for them, and wants to help them. But what will happen if we lose our compassion for the people we meet in our ministry? We will lose our zeal, that is, we will not be eager to preach to them, and we will not be able to help them. We can compare our zeal to a fire. For a fire to burn brightly, it needs a lot of oxygen. Similarly, for our zeal to be strong, we need to have compassion!—1 Thessalonians 5:19.

How can we learn to be more compassionate, even when it is difficult? Let us discuss three examples we can imitate: Jehovah, Jesus, and the apostle Paul.

IMITATE JEHOVAH’S COMPASSION

For thousands of years, people have told wicked lies about Jehovah. But he remains “kind toward the unthankful and wicked.” (Luke 6:35) How does he show his kindness? He is patient with everyone. Jehovah wants “all sorts of people” to be saved. (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) Even though God hates wickedness, people are precious to him and he does not want any of them to die.—2 Peter 3:9.

Jehovah knows that Satan is very good at making people believe lies. (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4) Many have been taught lies about God since they were children. So the way they think and feel may make it difficult for them to accept the truth. But Jehovah is eager to help them. How do we know?

Take, for example, how Jehovah felt about the people in the city of Nineveh. Even though they were violent, Jehovah said to Jonah: “Should I not also feel sorry for Nineveh the great city, in which there are more than 120,000 men who do not even know right from wrong?” (Jonah 4:11) Jehovah felt pity for those people, who did not know the truth about him. So he sent Jonah to warn them.

We feel the same way Jehovah does about people. They are precious. Like Jehovah, we are eager to help them learn about him even when it seems that they will not accept the truth.

IMITATE JESUS’ COMPASSION

Like his Father, Jesus felt pity for people “because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36) Jesus understood why they were in that situation. It was because their religious leaders treated them badly and taught them lies. And even though Jesus knew that many who came to listen to him would for various reasons not become his followers, he still taught them many things.—Mark 4:1-9.

When people react in a negative way to our message, we need to try to understand



Do not be discouraged if someone does not listen at first

why they do so. Maybe they have a bad opinion about the Bible or about Christians because they have seen that some who call themselves Christians do bad things. Others may have heard lies about what we believe. Still others may be afraid that their relatives or people from their community will ridicule them if they talk to us.

Some people we meet may have had terrible experiences that affected them deeply. A missionary named Kim says that many people in her territory survived a war and lost everything they had. They have no real hope for the future. They are frustrated and do not trust anyone. People in this territory often try to stop the Witnesses from preaching. One time Kim was even attacked while she was in the ministry.

How does Kim remain compassionate, even when people treat her badly? She always tries to remember Proverbs 19:11, which says: “The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger.” When she thinks about what the people in her territory went through, it helps her to feel compassion for them. And not everyone she meets is unfriendly. In that same territory, she has some good return visits.



When circumstances in life change, people may react to the truth in a different way

We can ask ourselves: ‘If I did not know the truth, how would I react if Jehovah’s Witnesses came to preach to me?’ For example, what if we had heard many lies about the Witnesses? Perhaps we too would react in a negative way and would need to be treated with compassion. Jesus said that we must treat others the way we would like to be treated. So we must try to understand how others feel and be patient with them, even if it is difficult. —Matthew 7:12.

IMITATE PAUL’S COMPASSION

The apostle Paul showed compassion even for people who reacted violently to his preaching. Why? Because he remembered how he used to be. He said: “Formerly I was a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man. Nevertheless, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and with a lack of faith.” (1 Timothy 1:13) Paul knew that Jehovah and Jesus had been very merciful to him. He could understand the people who wanted to stop his preaching, because he once felt as they did.

At times, Paul met people who strongly believed in false teachings. How did this make him feel? At Acts 17:16, we read that while he was in Athens, he “became irritated on see-



We keep looking for those who want to find the truth



In time, some people will accept our help and learn the truth

ing that the city was full of idols.” However, Paul used the very thing that irritated him as a way to teach people. (Acts 17:22, 23) He adjusted the way he preached, and he spoke in a different way to people of different backgrounds so that he “might by all possible means save some.”—1 Corinthians 9:20-23.

When we preach to people who react in a negative way or who have wrong beliefs, we can do what Paul did. We can use what we know about them to help them learn about the “good news of something better.” (Isaiah 52:7) A sister named Dorothy says: “In our territory, many have been taught that God is harsh and judgmental. I commend such people for their strong belief in God and then draw their attention to what the Bible says about Jehovah’s loving personality and his promises for the future.”

“KEEP CONQUERING THE EVIL WITH THE GOOD”

The closer we get to the end, the more we can expect that the attitudes of some people will go “from bad to worse.” (2 Timothy 3:1, 13) But we should not lose our compassion or joy because of the way they react. Jehovah can give us the strength to “keep conquering the evil with the good.” (Romans 12:

21) A pioneer named Jessica says that she often meets people who are proud and who mock us and our message. She adds: “This can be annoying. When I begin a conversation, I pray silently to Jehovah and ask for his help to see the person as he does.” This helps Jessica not to focus on her own feelings but rather to think about how to help the person.

We should also try to encourage our brothers and sisters while we preach with them. Jessica says that when she is in the ministry with others and one of them has a bad experience, she tries not to focus on that. Instead, she talks about something positive, such as the good results that our preaching has even though some react in a negative way.

Jehovah knows very well that sometimes it is difficult for us to preach. But he is very happy when we imitate his mercy! (Luke 6: 36) Of course, Jehovah will not be compassionate and patient with people in this world forever. We can be sure that he knows exactly when to bring the end. Until then, our preaching is urgent. (2 Timothy 4:2) So let us continue to preach with zeal and have true compassion for “all sorts of people.”



How to Make Your Study of the Bible

More Effective and Enjoyable

JOSHUA had to lead the nation of Israel into the Promised Land. This was going to be very difficult. However, Jehovah strengthened and encouraged him by saying: “Be courageous and very strong.” He told Joshua that if he read and obeyed the Law, then he would make wise decisions and be successful.—Joshua 1:7, 8.

We live in “critical times hard to deal with,” so our life can also be difficult. (2 Timothy 3:1) If we want to be successful like Joshua, we need to follow the advice Jehovah gave him. We need to read the Bible regularly and use what we learn to make good decisions.

But some of us may not know how to study, or we may not enjoy studying. Yet, personal Bible study is very important. As you review the box “Try These Suggestions,” you will find tips that will help you benefit from your study and enjoy it even more.

The psalmist sang: “Guide me in the pathway of your commandments, for in it **I take delight.**” (Psalm 119:35) You too can enjoy studying God’s Word. You will discover many beautiful thoughts as you continue to study the Bible.

Although you do not have to lead a nation as Joshua did, you do have your own difficulties. So, like Joshua, study and obey God’s Word. If you do, you will make wise decisions and be successful.

TRY THESE SUGGESTIONS



Pray before you study. The Bible contains Jehovah's thoughts, and they have been written for your benefit. So when you read the Bible, ask Jehovah to help you understand what you read, remember it, and use it to make good decisions in your life.—Ezra 7:10.



Ask yourself questions as you read the Bible or Bible-based literature. For example: 'What does this section tell me about Jehovah? How does this relate to the theme of the Bible? How can I use these thoughts to help others?'



Meditate on what you study. Stop for a moment, and think about what you just read. Ask yourself: 'How does this make me feel? Why does it make me feel that way? How does it relate to what has happened to me in the past, what is happening to me now, or what may happen to me in the future? How can I apply these Bible principles or this counsel in my life?' (Job 23:5; Psalm 49:3) When you meditate, see if you can explain why Jehovah tells his people to avoid certain practices. Or think about what the consequences would be if the person you just read about had done things differently.—Deuteronomy 32:28, 29.



Use your imagination when reading. For example, can you imagine the scene when Joseph's brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites? (Genesis 37:18-28) What do you see, hear, and smell? Put yourself in the place of the characters. What were they thinking and feeling? When you use your imagination, your study will be much more meaningful.



Use the study tools that the organization has provided. These can make your research interesting. Learn how to use the tools available in your language, both online and in print. Do not hesitate to ask others to help you learn how to use them effectively. For example, the *Watch Tower Publications Index* or the *Research Guide for Jehovah's Witnesses* will help you to find what has been written on certain subjects and will explain many Bible verses. Use the appendixes of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* if these are available in a language you can read. They have useful information on geography, chronology, weights and measures, and other subjects.



Summarize the main points. That will help you to remember what you have just studied. Better still, talk to others about what you learned. Is there something you can use in your ministry? By doing these things, you will remember the main points, and others will benefit from your study as well.

If a man and a woman who are not married to each other spend the night together without valid reasons, is this evidence that they have sinned and that a judicial committee should be formed?

■ Yes, spending the night alone together without valid reasons is strong evidence that they committed sexual immorality. Therefore, unless there are valid reasons, a judicial committee should be formed. —1 Corinthians 6:18.

The body of elders carefully considers each situation to determine if a judicial committee is necessary. For example: Have the couple been dating? Have the elders counseled them in the past about the way they behave toward each other? Why did they spend the night together? Did they plan ahead to do so? Did they have another option, or did something happen that was beyond their control, such as an unexpected event or an emergency that left them with no choice but to spend the night together? (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Where did they sleep? Each situation is different, so there may be other information that will affect the decision of the elders.

After the body of elders considers all the information, it will decide whether a judicial committee should be formed.

