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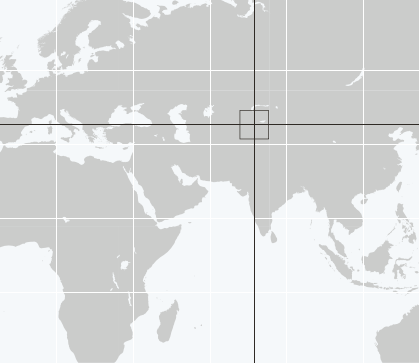
# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

SIMPLIFIED EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
**JUNE 4–JULY 8, 2018**



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**KYRGYZSTAN**

A special pioneer couple preach in a remote area near the city of Balykchy

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**4,653**

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# The Way to True Freedom

*“If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free.”—JOHN 8:36.*

TODAY, people in many parts of the world talk about equal rights and freedom. Some want to be free from unfair treatment, prejudice, and poverty. Others demand to be free to say what they want to say, to choose what they want to choose, and to live the way they want to live. People everywhere want to be free.

<sup>2</sup> To get freedom, people organize protests and even revolutions. But do they really get what they want? No. Usually, the result is more suffering and even death. King Solomon’s words found at Ecclesiastes 8:9 are very true: “Man has dominated man to his harm.”

<sup>3</sup> The Bible tells us what we need to do to be truly happy and satisfied. The disciple James said: “The one who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and continues in it . . . will be happy in what he does.”

- 1, 2. (a) What are people doing to get freedom? (b) What has been the result?
3. What can we do to be truly happy and satisfied?

SONGS: 54, 36

## CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

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What is relative freedom?

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How was true freedom lost?

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What freedom did Jesus promise, and how can we get it?

(James 1:25) The perfect law comes from Jehovah, and he knows best what we need in order to be completely happy and satisfied. Jehovah gave Adam and Eve true freedom and everything else they needed to be happy.

#### WHEN HUMANS WERE TRULY FREE

<sup>4</sup> When we read Genesis chapters 1 and 2, we learn that Adam and Eve had the kind of freedom that people today can only dream of. They had everything they needed, they were not afraid of anything, and no one treated them unfairly. They did not worry about food, work, sickness, or death. (Genesis 1:27-29; 2:8, 9, 15) But was their freedom without limits? Let us see.

<sup>5</sup> Many people think that having true freedom means that they can do whatever they want without worrying about the consequences. *The World Book Encyclopedia* says that freedom is “the ability to make choices and to carry them out.” However, it also says that people are free if a government does not limit them in ways that are unfair, unnecessary, or unreasonable. This means that some limits are necessary so that everyone can have freedom. But who has the right to decide whether a certain limit is fair, necessary, and reasonable?

<sup>6</sup> It is important for us to remember

4. What freedom did Adam and Eve have? (See opening picture.)

5. Despite what many think, what do people need in order to have freedom?

6. (a) Why is Jehovah the only one who has absolute freedom? (b) What sort of freedom can humans have, and why?

that only Jehovah God has absolute, unlimited freedom. Why? Because he created all things and he is the almighty Ruler of the universe. (1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 4:11) King David used beautiful words to describe Jehovah’s position. **(Read 1 Chronicles 29:11, 12.)** In contrast, the freedom of all creatures in heaven and on earth has limits. It is relative freedom. Jehovah God wants us to understand that only he has the right to decide what limits are fair, necessary, and reasonable. From the beginning, Jehovah set limits for his creation.

<sup>7</sup> Although Adam and Eve had a lot of freedom, their freedom had limits. Some of those limits felt natural to them. For example, to keep living, they had to breathe, eat, and sleep. Did that mean that they were not free? No. In fact, Jehovah made sure that doing those things would make them happy and content. (Psalm 104:14, 15; Ecclesiastes 3:12, 13) We all enjoy breathing fresh air, eating our favorite foods, and having a good night’s rest. We do not feel restricted when we do those things. Adam and Eve must have felt the same way.

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah gave Adam and Eve a specific command. He told them to have children, fill the earth, and take care of it. (Genesis 1:28) Did this command take away their freedom? Not at all! It

7. What are some things that we have to do that make us happy?

8. What specific command did God give Adam and Eve, and why?



gave them the opportunity to turn the whole earth into a paradise, making it a home where they could live forever with their perfect children. This was God's purpose. (Isaiah 45:18) Today, people are not disobeying God if they choose not to get married or have children. Still, people do get married and have children even though this brings some difficulties. (1 Corinthians 7:36-38) Why? Because they expect to find happiness and satisfaction. (Psalm 127:3) If Adam and Eve had obeyed Jehovah, they could have enjoyed their marriage and family forever.

#### HOW WAS TRUE FREEDOM LOST?

<sup>9</sup> Jehovah gave Adam and Eve another command and clearly told them what would happen if they disobeyed it. He said: "As for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will certainly die." (Genesis 2:17) Was that command unfair, unnecessary, or unreasonable? Did it take away Adam and Eve's freedom? Not at all. In fact, many Bible scholars think that God's command was very wise and made sense. One of them says that it teaches us "that only God knows what is good . . . for humanity and only God knows what is not good . . . for them. To enjoy the 'good,' humankind must trust God and obey him. If they disobey, they will be left to decide for

themselves what is good . . . and what is not good." That is something too difficult for humans to do on their own.

<sup>10</sup> Some people may think that Jehovah did not give Adam the freedom to do what he wanted. However, they do not realize that free will, or the right

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Only Jehovah has  
the right to decide  
what is good  
and what is bad

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to choose what to do, is not the same as the right to **decide** what is good and what is bad. Adam and Eve had the freedom to choose whether they would obey God or not. But only Jehovah has the right to decide what is good and what is bad. "The tree of the knowledge of good and bad" was evidence to Adam and Eve of that fact. (Genesis 2:9) We do not always know what the result of our choices will be, and we certainly cannot know if the results will always be good. That is why we often see people making choices or decisions with good intentions, but the result of these choices is suffering, disaster, or tragedy. (Proverbs 14:12) Yes, humans are limited in what they can do. By giving Adam and Eve the

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9. Why was God's command found at Genesis 2:17 not unfair, unnecessary, or unreasonable?

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10. Why is free will not the same thing as the right to decide what is good and what is bad?



command not to eat from the tree, Jehovah taught them that they had to obey him to have true freedom. What did Adam and Eve decide to do?

<sup>11</sup> Sadly, Adam and Eve chose to disobey Jehovah. Eve chose to listen to Satan when he promised: “Your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and bad.” (Genesis 3:5) Did Adam and Eve’s choice lead to more freedom, as Satan said it would? No, it did not. In fact, they found out that rejecting Jehovah’s direction led to disaster. (Genesis 3:16-19) Why? Because Jehovah did not give humans the freedom to decide for themselves what is good and what is bad.—**Read**

11, 12. Why did Adam and Eve’s choice lead to disaster? Give an example.

**Proverbs 20:24 and footnote; Jeremiah 10:23.**

<sup>12</sup> This is similar to a pilot flying an airplane. To get to his destination safely, he normally follows an approved route, using the navigation tools on the plane and communicating with air traffic controllers. But if the pilot does not follow directions and flies wherever he wants to go, it could lead to disaster. Like that pilot, Adam and Eve wanted to do things their own way. They rejected God’s guidance. What was the result? Disaster! Their decision led to sin and death for them and for all their children after them. (Romans 5:12) Adam and Eve did not gain more freedom by trying to decide for themselves what is good and what is



Adam and Eve's choice led to disaster!  
(See paragraphs 9-12)

bad. Instead, they lost the true freedom Jehovah had given them.

### HOW TO GAIN TRUE FREEDOM

<sup>13</sup> Some people think that having unlimited freedom would be best. But would it really? Even though having freedom has many benefits, can you imagine what the world would be like if there were no limits at all? *The World Book Encyclopedia* says that the laws of every organized society are complicated because they must protect and at the same time limit people's freedom. This is not always easy. For that reason, we see so many laws and so many lawyers and judges who try to explain and apply them.

13, 14. How can we gain true freedom?

<sup>14</sup> Jesus Christ explained how we can have true freedom. He said: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31, 32) So to have true freedom, we need to do two things. First, we need to accept the truth that Jesus taught. Second, we need to become his disciples. Doing these things will give us true freedom. But freedom from what? Jesus said: "Every doer of sin is a slave of sin." He added: "If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free."—John 8:34, 36.

<sup>15</sup> The freedom that Jesus promised

15. Why can the freedom that Jesus promised make us "truly free"?

his disciples is so much better than the kind of freedom most people want today. When Jesus said, “If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free,” he was talking about freedom from slavery to sin, the worst kind of slavery humans have ever experienced. In what way are we slaves of sin? Sin causes us to do bad things. It can also prevent us from doing what we know is right or from doing our best. The result is frustration, pain, suffering, and eventually death. (Romans 6:23) The apostle Paul felt how painful it was to be a slave of sin. **(Read Romans 7:21-25.)** Only when sin is completely removed will we have the true freedom that Adam and Eve once had.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus’ statement “if you remain in my word” shows that if we want Jesus

16. How can we become truly free?

to set us free, we need to do certain things. What things? As dedicated Christians, we have disowned ourselves and chosen to accept the limits Jesus set for his disciples. (Matthew 16:24) Just as Jesus promised, we will be truly free in the future when we receive all the benefits of the ransom sacrifice.

<sup>17</sup> To be truly happy and satisfied, we have to obey Jesus’ teachings as his disciples. If we do this, eventually we can become completely free from being slaves of sin and death. **(Read Romans 8:1, 2, 20, 21.)** In the next article, we will learn how we can wisely use the freedom we now have. Then we can honor Jehovah, the God of true freedom, forever.

17. (a) How can we be truly happy and satisfied? (b) What will we learn in the next article?

## SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

All humans have **relative freedom**, or freedom with limits. Although we have the freedom to make choices in life, we do not have the freedom to decide what is good and what is bad

Before they sinned, Adam and Eve had **true freedom** even though they had to obey God’s law. Today, Jesus sets us free when we accept the truth that he taught and become his disciples. In the future Paradise, we will have true freedom and we will no longer be slaves of sin and death





# Serve Jehovah, the God of Freedom

*“Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom.”*

—2 CORINTHIANS 3:17.

THE early Christians lived in the Roman Empire, where people were very proud of the laws, system of justice, and freedom that they had. Yet, that powerful empire relied on slaves to do most of the hard work. At one point, about 1 out of every 3 people in the Roman Empire was a slave. Certainly, slavery and freedom were important subjects for the common people, including Christians.

<sup>2</sup> The apostle Paul often wrote about freedom. But he was not trying to fix this world’s problems, which many people of that time wanted to do. Instead, Paul and his fellow Christians worked hard to teach people the good news of God’s Kingdom and to help them understand how precious the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus was. Paul told his fellow Christians where to find the Source of true freedom. He wrote: “Jehovah is the Spirit, and where the

1, 2. (a) Why were slavery and freedom important subjects in the apostle Paul’s day? (b) Who did Paul say is the Source of true freedom?

SONGS: 49, 73

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

In what ways has the spirit of Jehovah freed us?

How can we avoid using our freedom in the wrong way?

What can we do to use our freedom wisely?

spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom.”  
—2 Corinthians 3:17.

<sup>3</sup> In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul mentioned what happened to Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai after he had been in the presence of an angel of Jehovah. Rays of light were shining from his face! When the Israelites saw Moses, they became afraid, so he covered his face

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## Even someone who is in prison can have freedom

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with a veil. (Exodus 34:29, 30, 33; 2 Corinthians 3:7, 13) Paul explained: “But when one turns to Jehovah, the veil is taken away.” (2 Corinthians 3:16) What did Paul mean?

<sup>4</sup> We learned in the previous article that Jehovah, the Creator of all things, is the only Person who has absolute, unlimited freedom. So it makes sense that there is freedom in the presence of Jehovah and “where the spirit of Jehovah is.” But Paul said that if we want to have this freedom, we must turn to Jehovah. This means that we must have a close relationship with him. The Israelites in the wilderness saw things only from a human perspective, not from Jehovah’s viewpoint. It was as if they

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3, 4. (a) What did Paul discuss in the verses before 2 Corinthians 3:17? (b) What must we do to have the freedom that comes from Jehovah?

had a veil over their minds and hearts. They wanted to use their new freedom to satisfy their own desires.—Hebrews 3:8-10.

<sup>5</sup> The freedom that the spirit of Jehovah gives is more than freedom from being a slave. That spirit brings much greater freedom than humans ever could. It can free us from slavery to sin and death and from slavery to false worship and its customs. (Romans 6:23; 8:2) What an amazing freedom that is! Even someone who is a slave or in prison can have this freedom. (Genesis 39:20-23) Sister Nancy Yuen and Brother Harold King were each imprisoned for many years because of their faith, yet they still had this kind of freedom. You can watch them talk about their experiences on JW Broadcasting. (Look under INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES > ENDURING TRIALS.) Now let us answer two questions. How can we prove that our freedom is very precious to us? And how can we use our freedom wisely?

### THE FREEDOM GOD GIVES US IS VERY PRECIOUS

<sup>6</sup> When we receive a precious gift, we are grateful to the person who gave it to us. Yet, the Israelites were not grate-

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5. (a) What kind of freedom does the spirit of Jehovah give? (b) How do we know that someone can be a slave or in prison and still have the freedom Jehovah gives? (c) What questions do we need to answer?

6. How did the Israelites show that they were not grateful for the freedom that Jehovah had given them?



Are you using your freedom of choice  
to do what Jehovah wants or to do what you want?  
(See paragraphs 8-10)

ful for the freedom that Jehovah gave them. Only a few months after Jehovah freed them from Egypt, they started to crave the food and drink they used to have there. They complained about the manna, the food that Jehovah was providing for them. They even wanted to go back to Egypt! For them, ‘the fish, the cucumbers, the watermelons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic’ were more important than the freedom that Jehovah had given them to worship him. No wonder that Jehovah became very angry with them. (Numbers 11:5, 6, 10; 14:3, 4) This teaches us an important lesson.

<sup>7</sup> Paul warned all Christians not to become ungrateful for the freedom that Jehovah has given us through his Son, Jesus Christ. **(Read 2 Corinthians**

7. How did Paul apply his own counsel found at 2 Corinthians 6:1, and how can we do the same?

**ans 6:1.)** Paul was imperfect, a slave to sin and death, and this made him feel terrible. Still, he said: “Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Why did he say that? Paul explained to his fellow Christians: “For the law of the spirit that gives life in union with Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” (Romans 7:24, 25; 8:2) Like Paul, we should never forget that Jehovah has freed us from slavery to sin and death. The ransom makes it possible for us to serve our God with a clean conscience, and this gives us real joy.—Psalm 40:8.

<sup>8</sup> We should not only say that we are grateful to Jehovah, but we should also be careful that we do not use our freedom in the wrong way. For

8, 9. (a) What warning did the apostle Peter give about how we should use our freedom? (b) How could someone use his freedom in the wrong way?

example, the apostle Peter warned that we should not use our freedom as an excuse to do wrong things. (**Read 1 Peter 2:16.**) This warning reminds us of what happened to the Israelites in the wilderness. Today we also need this warning, perhaps even more so. Satan and his world offer many desirable things to wear, eat, drink, and be entertained by. Clever advertisers use beautiful people to make us think that we have to buy things that we do not really need. It can be very easy to be tricked by the world into using our freedom in the wrong way.

<sup>9</sup> Peter's counsel also applies to more serious matters in life, such as what education, job, or career we choose. For example, young ones today feel pressured to work very hard so that they can be accepted to the best universities. Many people tell them that if they get higher education, they will get good jobs, make a lot of money, and be respected. Those people may show them information that seems to prove that those who graduate from a university will earn more money than those who graduate from high school. Higher education may seem like a very good idea to young people when they have to make choices that can affect the rest of their life. But what should they and their parents remember?

<sup>10</sup> Some may feel that because these matters are personal, they should have the freedom to choose whatever they

want as long as it does not bother their conscience. They may think of Paul's words: "Why should my freedom be judged by another person's conscience?" (1 Corinthians 10:29) Although we have the freedom to make our own choices about our education and our career, we must remember that our freedom has limits and that all our decisions have consequences. That is why Paul said: "All things are permissible, but not all things are advantageous. All things are lawful, but not all things build up." (1 Corinthians 10:23; footnote) So even though we have the freedom to make choices in personal matters, what we want is not the most important thing.

#### **WE USE OUR FREEDOM WISELY WHEN WE SERVE JEHOVAH**

<sup>11</sup> When Peter warned us not to use our freedom in the wrong way, he said that the right way to use it is "as slaves of God." The reason Jehovah has used Jesus to free us from slavery to sin and death is so that we can use our whole life to serve Him.

<sup>12</sup> The best way to use our freedom is to use our time and energy to serve Jehovah fully. Doing this will protect us from letting worldly goals and personal desires become the most important things in our life. (Galatians 5:16) Think of what Noah and his family did. They lived in a violent and immoral

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11. What is the reason why Jehovah has freed us?

12. What example did Noah and his family set for us?

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10. What must we remember when we make choices in personal matters?



world. But they did not get involved in the goals and activities of the people around them. They chose to stay busy doing the work Jehovah had given them to do. They built the ark, collected food for themselves and the animals, and warned others about the Flood. “Noah did according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so.” (Genesis 6:22) As a result, Noah and his family survived the end of that world.—Hebrews 11:7.

<sup>13</sup> What has Jehovah commanded us to do today? As Jesus’ disciples, we know that God has commanded us to preach. **(Read Luke 4:18, 19.)** Today, Satan has blinded most people and they do not realize that they are slaves of false religion, material things, and the political system. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Like Jesus, we have the privilege to help others get to know and worship Jehovah, the God of freedom. (Matthew 28:19, 20) Preaching to others is not easy. In some places, people are not interested in getting to know God, and some even become angry when we preach to them. But since Jehovah has commanded us to preach, we should ask ourselves, ‘Can I use my freedom to do more in Jehovah’s service?’

<sup>14</sup> It is encouraging that many of Jehovah’s people have realized that the end of this system is very close and have decided to simplify their lives and start pioneering. (1 Corinthians 9:

19, 23) Some pioneer in their home area, while others move to congregations that need help. In the last five years, more than 250,000 have started pioneering, and now there are over

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The best way to  
use our freedom  
is to use our time  
and energy to serve  
Jehovah fully

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1,100,000 regular pioneers. How wonderful it is that so many are using their freedom to serve Jehovah in this way! —Psalm 110:3.

<sup>15</sup> What helped them to use their freedom wisely? Consider John and Judith, who have served in several countries for the past 30 years. They explain that when Pioneer Service School began in 1977, the students were encouraged to move and serve where there was a greater need. To reach that goal, John and Judith needed to keep their life simple. So John often changed his job. Eventually, they went to preach in a foreign country. What helped them to overcome difficulties such as learning a new language and adjusting to a new culture and climate? They prayed to Jehovah and relied on him to help them. How do they feel about serving Jehovah in this way for all these years? John says: “I felt that I was immersed

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13. What has Jehovah commanded us to do?

14, 15. What have many of Jehovah’s people decided to do? (See opening picture.)

in the best activity I've ever known or experienced. Jehovah became more real to me, as a loving father would be. Now I understood better what James 4:8 means: 'Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.' I knew I had found what I was looking for, a satisfying purpose in life."

<sup>16</sup> Some, like John and Judith, can pioneer for a long time. Because of circumstances, others can pioneer for only a little while. Still, many volunteer to work on construction projects around the world. For example, about 27,000 brothers and sisters came to help with the construction of world headquarters at Warwick, New York. Some came for two weeks, some for a few months, and others for a year or longer. Many of those brothers and sis-

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16. How have thousands used their freedom wisely?

ters made sacrifices in order to serve at Warwick. They are wonderful examples of people who have used their freedom to praise and honor Jehovah, the God of freedom!

<sup>17</sup> We are grateful that we have come to know Jehovah and that we have the freedom that comes from worshipping him. Let us prove by the choices we make that this freedom is very precious to us. Instead of using it in the wrong way, let us use it to serve Jehovah as fully as we can. Then we can enjoy the blessings Jehovah promised for the time when this prophecy will come true: "The creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Romans 8:21.

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17. What can we look forward to if we use our freedom wisely now?

## SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

**We use our freedom in the wrong way** when we do what we want instead of what Jehovah wants. It is easy for this to happen, because Satan's world tries to make us focus on our personal desires rather than on our service to Jehovah

**We use our freedom wisely** when we put our service to Jehovah first in our life. If we keep our life simple, we will be able to use more of our time and energy to serve Jehovah



# Imitating Jehovah A God Who Gives Encouragement

*“Praised be the God . . . who encourages us  
in all our trials.”—2 CORINTHIANS 1:3, 4, footnote.*

JEHOVAH is a God who gives encouragement. He has been doing this ever since humans sinned and became imperfect. In fact, immediately after Adam and Eve rebelled against God, He provided a prophecy that, once understood, would give courage and hope to humans who would be born in the future. This prophecy is found at Genesis 3:15 and promises that Satan the Devil and all his evil works will be destroyed.—1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:9.

## JEHOVAH ENCOURAGED HIS SERVANTS IN THE PAST

<sup>2</sup> Think of how Jehovah encouraged his servant Noah. People who lived during his time were violent and immoral, and only Noah and his family worshipped Jehovah.

1. When Adam and Eve rebelled, how did Jehovah give encouragement and hope to mankind?
2. How did Jehovah encourage Noah?

SONGS: 7, 3

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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How has Jehovah always been a God who gives encouragement?

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How did Jesus encourage others?

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How did the apostles encourage their brothers?

Noah could have become discouraged. (Genesis 6:4, 5, 11; Jude 6) But Jehovah gave Noah the courage he needed to keep worshipping Him and doing what was right. (Genesis 6:9) Jehovah told Noah that He was going to destroy that wicked world, and He explained what Noah had to do so that his family could survive. (Genesis 6:13-18) Jehovah was a God of encouragement for Noah.

<sup>3</sup> Later, Jehovah encouraged his servant Joshua, who had a huge task ahead of him. He had to lead God's people into the Promised Land and conquer the powerful armies of the nations that lived there. Jehovah knew that Joshua had every reason to be afraid, so He told Moses: "Commission Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him, because he is the one who will cross over before this people and he is the one who will cause them to inherit the land that you will see." (Deuteronomy 3:28) Then Jehovah himself encouraged Joshua, saying: "Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and strong. Do not be struck with terror or fear, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:1, 9) How do you think these words made Joshua feel?

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah also encouraged his people as a group. For example, Jehovah

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3. How did Jehovah encourage Joshua? (See opening picture.)

4, 5. (a) How did Jehovah encourage his people in the past? (b) How did Jehovah encourage his Son?

knew that the Jews would need encouragement when they were captives in Babylon, and he gave them an encouraging prophecy, stating: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be anxious, for I am your God. I will fortify you, yes, I will help you, I will really hold on to you with my right hand of righteousness." (Isaiah 41:10) Later, Jehovah encouraged the early Christians, and he encourages us in the same way.—**Read 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.**

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah also gave encouragement to his Son. After Jesus was baptized, he heard a voice from heaven say: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." (Matthew 3:17) Can you imagine how much strength these words gave Jesus during his ministry on earth?

### JESUS ENCOURAGED OTHERS

<sup>6</sup> Jesus imitated his Father by encouraging others to be faithful. He did so in the parable of the talents, where he said that the master told each faithful slave: "Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master." (Matthew 25:21, 23) These words encouraged his disciples to keep serving Jehovah faithfully!

<sup>7</sup> Even though the apostles often argued about who was the greatest, Je-

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6. How can Jesus' parable of the talents encourage us?

7. How did Jesus encourage his apostles, especially Peter?



sus was always patient with them. He encouraged them to be humble and to serve others, rather than wanting others to serve them. (Luke 22:24-26) Several times Peter made mistakes and disappointed Jesus. (Matthew 16:21-23; 26:31-35, 75) But Jesus never rejected Peter. Instead, he encouraged Peter and even gave him the assignment to strengthen others.—John 21:16.

### ENCOURAGEMENT IN ANCIENT TIMES

<sup>8</sup> Even before they had Jesus' example to follow, Jehovah's servants knew that they needed to encourage others. Think of Hezekiah. When the Assyrians were about to attack Jerusalem, he gathered the military chiefs and the people to encourage them, and they 'were strengthened by his words.' —**Read 2 Chronicles 32:6-8.**

<sup>9</sup> We can also learn about giving encouragement from Job. Although he needed encouragement himself, he taught others how to be encouraging. Job told the men who came to comfort him that if he were trying to comfort them, he would have said things to strengthen them and make them feel better, not things to cause them pain. (Job 16:1-5) But Job finally did get encouragement from Elihu and from Jehovah himself.—Job 33:24, 25; 36:1, 11; 42:7, 10.

8. How did Hezekiah encourage the military chiefs and the people of Judah?

9. What can we learn from Job about giving encouragement?

<sup>10</sup> Jephthah's daughter also needed encouragement. Her father, Judge Jephthah, was going to fight the Ammonites. He promised that if Jehovah helped him to win the battle, the first

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## Jesus encouraged Peter and even gave him the assignment to strengthen others

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person who met him when he returned home would go to serve Jehovah at the tabernacle. Israel won the battle, and the first person who came to meet Jephthah was his daughter, his only child. Jephthah's heart was broken. But he kept his promise and sent his daughter to serve at the tabernacle for the rest of her life.—Judges 11:30-35.

<sup>11</sup> Although this was difficult for Jephthah, it must have been even more difficult for his daughter. However, she was willing to do what her father had promised. (Judges 11:36, 37) This meant that she would never get married or have children. The family line would end. She needed a lot of comfort and encouragement. The Bible says: "It became a custom in Israel: From year to year, the young women of

10, 11. (a) Why did Jephthah's daughter need encouragement? (b) Whom can we encourage today?



Israel would go to give commendation to the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.” (Judges 11:39, 40) Jephthah’s daughter makes us think of Christians today who stay single so that they can do more for Jehovah. Could we commend and encourage them?—1 Corinthians 7:32-35.

### THE APOSTLES ENCOURAGED THEIR BROTHERS

<sup>12</sup> On the night before Jesus died, he told the apostle Peter: “Simon, Simon, look! Satan has demanded to have all of you to sift you as wheat. But I have made supplication for you that your

12, 13. How did Peter ‘strengthen his brothers’?

faith may not give out; and you, once you have returned, strengthen your brothers.”—Luke 22:31, 32.

<sup>13</sup> Peter was one of those who took the lead in the early Christian congregation. (Galatians 2:9) He encouraged the brothers by his courageous actions at Pentecost and afterward. After he had served for many years, he wrote to the brothers: “I have written you in few words in order to encourage you and to give an earnest witness that this is the true undeserved kindness of God. Stand firm in it.” (1 Peter 5:12) Peter’s letters encouraged Christians of his day. And they still encourage us today as we wait for Jehovah’s promises to be completely fulfilled!—2 Peter 3:13.



The apostles' letters encouraged Christians in the first century, and they still encourage us today (See paragraphs 12-17)

<sup>14</sup> The apostle John was also one who took the lead in the early Christian congregation. He wrote an exciting Gospel account of Jesus' ministry. This Bible book has encouraged Christians for hundreds of years and continues to encourage us today. For example, only in John's account do we read Jesus' statement that love is the quality that identifies his true disciples. —**Read John 13:34, 35.**

<sup>15</sup> The three letters that John wrote also contain precious truths. When we feel discouraged because of our mistakes, we are relieved to read that Je-

sus' ransom sacrifice "cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) And if we keep feeling guilty, we will be comforted when we read that "God is greater than our hearts." (1 John 3:20) John is the only Bible writer who wrote that "God is love." (1 John 4:8, 16) His second and third letters commend Christians who keep "walking in the truth." —2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4.

<sup>16</sup> The apostle Paul was an excellent example of one who gave encouragement to his brothers. Shortly after Jesus died, most of the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, the location of

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14, 15. How do the Bible books the apostle John wrote encourage us?

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16, 17. How did the apostle Paul encourage the early Christians?

the governing body. (Acts 8:14; 15:2) Christians in Judea preached about Christ to people who already believed in one God. But the holy spirit sent Paul to preach to Greeks, Romans, and others who worshipped many gods. —Galatians 2:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:7.

<sup>17</sup> Paul traveled in the area that is now called Turkey, as well as in Greece and Italy. He preached to the non-Jews who lived in those places, and he formed Christian congregations. Life was not easy for the new Christians. Their own countrymen persecuted them, so they needed encouragement. (1 Thessalonians 2:14) About the year 50, Paul wrote an encouraging letter to the new congregation in Thessalonica. He said: “We always thank God when we mention all of you in our prayers, for we continually remember your faithful work, your loving labor, and your endurance.” (1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3) He also asked them to strengthen one another and wrote: “Keep encouraging one another and building one another up.”—1 Thessalonians 5:11.

### THE GOVERNING BODY GIVES ENCOURAGEMENT

<sup>18</sup> In the first century, Jehovah used the governing body to encourage all Christians, including those who were taking the lead in the congregations. When Philip preached about Christ to the Samaritans, the governing body supported him. They sent two of their

members, Peter and John, to pray for the new Christians to receive holy spirit. (Acts 8:5, 14-17) Philip and those new brothers and sisters were very encouraged by the support they received from the governing body!

<sup>19</sup> Later, the governing body needed to make an important decision. Did non-Jewish Christians have to get circumcised as the Jews did according to the Law of Moses? (Acts 15: 1, 2) After the governing body prayed for holy spirit and reasoned on the Scriptures, they decided that this was no longer necessary. Then they wrote a letter explaining their decision and sent brothers to deliver it to the congregations. When the Christians read this letter, “they rejoiced over the encouragement.”—Acts 15:27-32.

<sup>20</sup> Today, the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses gives encouragement to Bethelites, to special full-time servants in the field, and to all of us. Like the brothers in the first century, we rejoice over the encouragement! Also, to encourage those who have left the truth to return, in 2015 the Governing Body provided the brochure *Return to Jehovah*. But should only the brothers who take the lead encourage others, or should all of us do so? We will discuss this question in the next article.

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19. How did the early Christians feel when they read the letter from the governing body?

20. (a) How does the Governing Body today encourage all of us? (b) What question will we discuss in the next article?

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18. How did the governing body in the first century encourage Philip?





## Encourage One Another “All the More So”

*“Let us consider one another . . . , encouraging one another, and all the more so as you see the day drawing near.”—HEBREWS 10:24, 25.*

IN THE first century, the apostle Paul gave this advice to the Hebrew Christians: “Let us consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking our meeting together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and **all the more so as you see the day drawing near.**” (Hebrews 10:24, 25) The brothers may have wondered why Paul told them to be even more encouraging to one another. Less than five years later, one reason became clear. At that time, they saw that Jehovah’s day of judgment on Jerusalem was near. They recognized that they needed to flee from the city as Jesus had told them to do. (Luke 21:20-22; Acts 2:19, 20) That day of Jehovah came in the year 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

1. Why did the apostle Paul urge the early Hebrew Christians to encourage one another “all the more so”?

SONGS: 90, 87

### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why did the apostle Paul tell Christians to encourage one another “all the more so”?

Who need encouragement today?

Who can encourage fellow Christians?

<sup>2</sup> Today, we are in a similar situation. Jehovah's "great and very awe-inspiring" day is near. (Joel 2:11) The words of the prophet Zephaniah also apply to our time: "The great day of Jehovah is near! It is near and it is approaching very quickly!" (Zephaniah 1:14) For this reason, we should "be concerned about one another so as to incite to love and fine works." (Hebrews 10:24, footnote) We need to become even more interested in our brothers so that we can encourage them when they need it.

### WHO NEED ENCOURAGEMENT?

<sup>3</sup> "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up." (Proverbs 12:25) All of us at times need encouragement. Paul made it clear that even those who are responsible for encouraging others also need to be encouraged themselves. He wrote to his brothers in Rome: "I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you for you to be made firm; or, rather, that we may have an interchange of encouragement by one another's faith, both yours and mine." (Romans 1:11, 12) So even the apostle Paul needed encouragement at times. —**Read Romans 15:30-32.**

<sup>4</sup> Today, we can encourage those who serve Jehovah full-time, such as faithful pioneers. Many of them have sac-

rificed things they enjoy in life so that they can pioneer. This is also true of missionaries, Bethelites, circuit overseers and their wives, and those who serve at remote translation offices. They all make sacrifices in order to spend more time serving Jehovah. So we should encourage them. There are also many who wish they could still be in full-time service but are no longer able to. They too are grateful when they receive encouragement.

<sup>5</sup> Who else deserve encouragement? We can encourage the many brothers and sisters who have chosen to remain single because they want to obey Jehovah and marry "only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39) Wives are encouraged when their husbands tell them they love them and are grateful for all they do. (Proverbs 31:28, 31) Christians who endure persecution or sickness also need to be encouraged. (2 Thessalonians 1:3-5) Jehovah and Jesus comfort all these faithful ones. —**Read 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17.**

### ELDERS CAN ENCOURAGE US

<sup>6</sup> **Read Isaiah 32:1, 2.** We live in difficult times and could easily become sad and discouraged. Jesus Christ uses his anointed brothers and faithful "princes" of the other sheep to encourage us. These congregation elders are not "masters" over our faith but "fellow workers" for our joy. They want to help us be happy and stay faithful. —**2 Corinthians 1:24.**

6. What do we learn about the role of the elders at Isaiah 32:1, 2?

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2. Why should we think even more about encouraging one another today?

3. What did the apostle Paul say about encouragement? (See opening picture.)

4, 5. Whom can we encourage today, and why?

<sup>7</sup> Elders can imitate the apostle Paul, who always tried to encourage his brothers. He wrote to Christians in Thessalonica who were being persecuted: “Having tender affection for you, we were determined to impart to you, not only the good news of God but also our very selves, because you became so beloved to us.”—1 Thessalonians 2:8.

<sup>8</sup> Elders can be very encouraging by what they say. But is that always enough? Paul told the elders from Ephesus: “You must assist those who are weak and must keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said: ‘There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.’” (Acts 20:35) Paul was willing to “spend and be completely spent for” his brothers. He proved by his actions that he was willing to do his best for them. (2 Corinthians 12:15) In a similar way, elders should encourage and comfort others not only by what they say but also by what they do. This shows that they really care about us.—1 Corinthians 14:3.

<sup>9</sup> To strengthen the brothers, elders sometimes need to give counsel. Elders can learn from the Bible how to do this in an encouraging way. Jesus set an excellent example in giving counsel when he sent messages to the congregations in Asia Minor after his death and resurrection. He had some strong counsel for the congregations in Ephesus, Per-

gamum, and Thyatira. But before he gave the counsel, he commended them for all the good things they were doing. (Revelation 2:1-5, 12, 13, 18, 19) Jesus told the congregation in Laodicea: “All those for whom I have affection, I reprove and discipline. So be zealous and repent.” (Revelation 3:19) Our elders try to imitate Christ in the way they give counsel.

### NOT ONLY THE ELDERS NEED TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS

<sup>10</sup> Elders are not the only ones who need to encourage others. Paul urged all Christians to speak “what is good for building up as the need may be, to impart what is beneficial” to others. (Ephesians 4:29) Each of us should be aware of what others need so that we can help them. Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians: “Strengthen the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and keep making straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but, rather, may be healed.” (Hebrews 12:12, 13) All of us can strengthen and encourage one another by what we say, even if we are very young.

<sup>11</sup> A sister named Marthe was depressed for a while.\* (See footnote.) She wrote: “One day when I was praying for encouragement, I met an older sister who showed me affection and

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\* Names have been changed.

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7, 8. How can elders encourage others by what they say and by what they do?

9. How can the elders give counsel in an encouraging way?

10. How can all of us strengthen one another?

11. What helped Marthe when she was depressed?

compassion, which I was in particular need of at the time. She also shared with me her own experience with the kind of test I was going through, and I felt less alone.” That sister probably did not even realize how much her words helped Marthe!

<sup>12</sup> Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi: “If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any spiritual fellowship, if any tender affection and compassion, make my joy full by being of the same mind and having the same love, being completely united, having the one thought in mind. Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but

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12, 13. How can we apply the advice found at Philippians 2:1-4?

with humility consider others superior to you, as you look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.”—Philippians 2:1-4.

<sup>13</sup> All of us should look for ways to help one another. We can offer “consolation of love,” “spiritual fellowship,” and “tender affection and compassion” to encourage our brothers and sisters.

### SOME WAYS TO ENCOURAGE

<sup>14</sup> It makes us happy to hear that those whom we helped in the past are remaining faithful. The apostle John wrote: “No greater joy do I have than this: that I should hear that my

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14. What is one way we can give encouragement?





children go on walking in the truth.” (3 John 4) Many pioneers are thrilled when they find out that someone whom they helped to learn the truth long ago is still serving Jehovah faithfully, maybe even pioneering. So if pioneers feel discouraged, we can remind them of all the good they have done to help others.

<sup>15</sup> Many circuit overseers have said that they and their wives were encouraged when they received a thank-you note after they visited a congregation. This is also true for elders, missionaries, pioneers, and Bethelites, who all serve Jehovah faithfully. By thanking them, we may encourage them more than we know.

15. What is something we can do to encourage those who are serving faithfully?

## HOW ALL OF US CAN BE ENCOURAGING

<sup>16</sup> What if you do not find it easy to tell others how you feel about them? Actually, it is not so difficult to encourage others. Try giving someone a nice smile. If they do not smile back, it could be that they are having a problem and need someone to talk to. You may comfort them simply by listening. —James 1:19.

<sup>17</sup> A young brother named Henri was very upset when several of his close relatives stopped serving Jehovah. One of these was his father, who had been an elder. A circuit overseer

16. What simple things can encourage someone?

17. What encouraged one young brother?



Parents, are you training your children to encourage others?

(See paragraph 10)

noticed that Henri was sad and took him out for coffee. He listened carefully as Henri expressed his feelings. Henri realized that the only way he could help his family come back to the truth was to stay faithful himself. He was also comforted by reading Psalm 46, Zephaniah 3:17, and Mark 10:29, 30.

<sup>18</sup> What can we learn from the experiences of Marthe and Henri? Any of us can comfort and encourage a brother or a sister who needs it. King Solomon wrote: “A word spoken at the right time—how good it is! A cheerful glance makes the heart rejoice; a good report invigorates the bones.” (Proverbs 15:23, 30, footnote.) Can you think of someone you know who is feel-

18. (a) What did King Solomon write about encouragement? (b) What did the apostle Paul suggest?

ing discouraged or sad? Why not do something as simple as reading to him from *The Watchtower* or our website? Also, Paul taught that singing Kingdom songs together can make us feel better. He wrote: “Keep on teaching and encouraging one another with psalms, praises to God, spiritual songs sung with gratitude, singing in your hearts to Jehovah.”—Colossians 3:16; Acts 16:25.

<sup>19</sup> As we get closer to Jehovah’s day, it will be even more important for us to encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:25) We will be happy if we do as Paul advised: “Keep encouraging one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing.”—1 Thessalonians 5:11.

19. Why will encouragement soon become more and more important, and what should we do?



All of us can strengthen  
and encourage one another  
(See paragraph 18)





# Young People, Are You Focused on Spiritual Goals?

*“Commit to Jehovah whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.”—PROVERBS 16:3.*

IMAGINE that you plan to go to a special event in a town far away. To make the trip, you need to take a bus. At the bus station, at first you feel confused because there are so many people and so many buses. But happily, you know exactly where you want to go and which bus to take. You will not take any other bus, because you know it would take you in the wrong direction.

<sup>2</sup> Life is like a journey, and you young ones are like the people at the bus station. Sometimes there are so many choices and options in life that you could feel confused. But if you know exactly where you want to go, it will be easier for you to make the right choices. Which direction should you take?

<sup>3</sup> This article will answer that question and will encourage you to focus your life on pleasing Jehovah. This

1-3. (a) In what situation are all young people, and to what can we compare that? (See opening picture.) (b) What will help young Christians in this situation?

SONGS: 135, 144

## YOUNG ONES, HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why is it good for you to do what Proverbs 16:3 says?

What goals can you work to reach?

What will help you not to forget your goals?



means following Jehovah's advice in all decisions you have to make in life, such as what education or job you will get or whether you will get married and have children. And it means working to reach spiritual goals, that is, goals that will bring you closer to Jehovah. If you stay focused on serving Jehovah, you can be sure that he will bless you and help you to succeed.—**Read Proverbs 16:3.**

### WHY SET SPIRITUAL GOALS?

<sup>4</sup> It is good to set spiritual goals. Why? We will examine three reasons. The first and the second will help you to see that working to reach spiritual goals will make you an even better friend of Jehovah. The third will show why it is good to set these goals when you are young.

<sup>5</sup> The most important reason for setting spiritual goals is to thank Jehovah for his love and for what he has done for us. One writer of the Psalms said: "It is good to give thanks to Jehovah . . . For you have made me rejoice, O Jehovah, because of your deeds; because of the works of your hands I shout joyfully." (Psalm 92:1, 4) Think about everything Jehovah has given you: your life, your faith, the Bible, the congregation, and the hope of living forever in Paradise. When you set spiritual goals, you show Jehovah that you are thankful for all these things, and that brings you closer to him.

4. What will we examine in this article?

5. What is the most important reason for setting spiritual goals?

<sup>6</sup> The second reason to set spiritual goals is that when you work to reach them, you are doing good work for Jehovah. This will bring you even closer to him. The apostle Paul promised: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name." (Hebrews 6:10) You are never too young to set goals. For example, Christine was 10 years old when she decided to read the life stories of faithful Witnesses regularly. Toby was 12 when he set the goal of reading the whole Bible before getting baptized. Maxim was 11 and his sister Noemi was 10 when they got baptized. They both set the goal of serving at Bethel. To stay focused on that goal, they posted a Bethel application on a wall in their home. What about you? Can you think of some goals **you** can set and start working to reach?—**Read Philippians 1:10, 11.**

<sup>7</sup> What is the third reason why it is good to set goals when you are young? As a young person, you have many decisions to make. You need to decide what education or job you will get and many other things. These decisions in life are like the crossroads you reach when you take a trip. If you know where you are going, it is easy to decide which road to take. In the same way, if you know what your goals are, it is eas-

6. (a) How do spiritual goals affect your relationship with Jehovah? (b) What are some goals that you can set when you are young?

7, 8. (a) How can setting goals make it easier to make decisions? (b) Why did one teenager choose not to go to university?



ier to make wise decisions. Proverbs 21:5 says: “The plans of the diligent surely lead to success.” The earlier you make plans by setting good goals, the sooner you will have success. This is what Damaris experienced when she needed to make an important decision as a teenager.

<sup>8</sup> Damaris had very good grades when she finished high school, and she could have gone to university to study law without having to pay for her education. Instead, she chose to work in a bank. Why? Because when she was very young, she decided that she would pioneer. She says: “That meant working part-time. With a university degree in law, I could have earned a lot of money, but I would have had little chance of finding part-time work.” Damaris has been a pioneer for 20 years. Does she feel that she set the right goal and made the right decision when she was a teenager? Yes. At the bank where she works, she meets many lawyers who do the work she would be doing if she had gone to university. She says that many of them are very unhappy with their jobs. Damaris feels that all these years of pioneering have given her a lot of joy and have helped her to avoid being unhappy like them.

<sup>9</sup> Thousands of our young ones all around the world are doing very well and deserve to be commended. Their friendship with Jehovah and their spiritual goals are at the center of their lives. These young people really enjoy

life, and at the same time, they are learning to follow Jehovah’s direction in everything, which includes education, work, and family life. Solomon said: “Trust in Jehovah with all your

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If you know what  
your goals are,  
it is easier to make  
wise decisions

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heart.” He added: “In all your ways take notice of him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5, 6) Young ones, Jehovah loves you very much! You are precious to him, and he will protect, guide, and bless you.

#### **PREPARE WELL TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT JEHOVAH**

<sup>10</sup> When you focus your life on pleasing Jehovah, you will want to tell others about him. Jesus Christ said that “the good news has to be preached first.” (Mark 13:10) So the preaching work is urgent and should be one of the most important things to us. Could you set the goal of preaching more often? Could you pioneer? But what if you do not enjoy preaching very much? And how can you become better at explaining your beliefs? Two things will help you: Prepare well, and do not give up telling others what you know about

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10. (a) Why must the preaching work be one of the most important things to us? (b) How can you become better at explaining your beliefs?

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9. Why are we proud of our young people?



How do you prepare to tell others about Jehovah?  
(See paragraphs 11, 12)

Jehovah. You may be surprised how much you will then enjoy preaching.

<sup>11</sup> Start by preparing an answer to some questions your schoolmates might ask, for example, “Why do you believe in God?” There are articles on our [jw.org](http://jw.org) website that can help you to answer that question. If you look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS, you will find a worksheet with the title “Why Do I Believe in God?” Follow the steps on this worksheet to prepare your own answer. You will find three Bible verses you can use: Hebrews 3:4, Romans 1:20, and Psalm 139:14. There are also other worksheets you can use to

11, 12. (a) What can you do to prepare to tell others about Jehovah? (b) How did one young brother use an opportunity to talk about Jehovah at school?

prepare answers to many more questions.—**Read 1 Peter 3:15.**

<sup>12</sup> Tell your schoolmates that they can look up things on [jw.org](http://jw.org) for themselves. That is what Luca did. His class was talking about different religions. Luca noticed that the textbook said things about Jehovah’s Witnesses that were incorrect. Even though Luca was nervous, he asked the teacher if he could tell the class about why those things were wrong. The teacher allowed him to explain what he believes, and he was able to show the website to the whole class. For homework the teacher asked everyone in the class to watch the video *Beat a Bully Without Using Your Fists*. Can you imagine how happy Luca was that he had talked about Jehovah at school?

<sup>13</sup> When you face difficulties, do not become discouraged but keep working at your goals. (2 Timothy 4:2) That is what Katharina did. She was 17 when she set the goal to preach to each of her workmates. One of them insulted her several times. But she did not forget her goal. Her good behavior impressed another workmate, whose name was Hans. He started to read our publications, studied the Bible, and got baptized. Katharina did not know about this because by then she had moved away. So she was very surprised when 13 years later, while she was at a meeting with her family, the speaker for the public talk was Hans! She was very happy that she had not given up her goal of preaching to her workmates.

### DO NOT FORGET YOUR GOALS

<sup>14</sup> So far this article has encouraged you to decide to focus your life on pleasing Jehovah and to set spiritual goals. But many young people who are your age just want to have a good time. And they will probably invite you to do what they do. Sooner or later, you will need to let others see how important it is to you to reach your goals. Do not allow others to make you forget these goals. If you were at the bus station mentioned at the beginning of the article, would you get on just any bus be-

cause the people on it were having a good time? No, of course not!

<sup>15</sup> So, what can you do to remain strong when others pressure you to do what they do? Avoid situations where it will be hard to resist the pressure. (Proverbs 22:3) Think about the painful consequences of doing things that are wrong. (Galatians 6:7) And humbly admit that you need good advice. Listen to what your parents and experienced brothers and sisters in the congregation tell you.—**Read 1 Peter 5:5, 6.**

<sup>16</sup> Humility helped Christoph to accept good advice. Soon after he got baptized, he started going to a fitness center regularly. There, other young people invited him to join their sports club. He talked to an elder about it, and the elder told him to think about some of the dangers, such as becoming very competitive. Christoph decided to join the sports club anyway. But after a while, he noticed that the sport was violent and even dangerous. Again he talked to the elders, and they gave him advice from the Bible. Christoph says, “Jehovah sent me good advisers, and I listened to Him, even if it took some time.” Are you humble enough to accept good advice?

<sup>17</sup> The Bible says: “Rejoice, young man [or woman], while you are young,

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13. Why should we not give up when we face difficulties?

14, 15. (a) What should you remember when others pressure you to do what they do? (b) What can you do to remain strong when others pressure you?

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16. How does the experience of Christoph show that it is important to be humble?

17, 18. (a) What does Jehovah want for young people today? (b) How can you avoid regretting your choices when you become an adult? Give an experience.

## SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

To **focus your life on pleasing Jehovah** means to make pleasing Jehovah the most important thing to you. You follow his advice in all parts of your life and let him guide you in all your choices

**Spiritual goals** are goals that help you improve your relationship with Jehovah. Some young people have the goal to read the Bible every day, get baptized, become a pioneer, or go to Bethel. What are your goals?

and let your heart be glad in the days of your youth.” (Ecclesiastes 11:9) Jehovah wants you to be happy when you are young. In this article, you have learned that one way to be happy is to stay focused on your spiritual goals and to follow Jehovah’s advice in all your plans and decisions. The earlier you do this in your life, the sooner you will experience how Jehovah guides, protects, and blesses you. Think of all the good counsel he gives you in his Word, and apply the advice: “Remember, then, your Grand Creator in the days of your youth.”—Ecclesiastes 12:1.

<sup>18</sup> Young ones quickly grow up and become adults. Sadly, many of them later regret that they set the wrong goals or had no goals at all when they were young. But if you stay focused on your spiritual goals, you will be happy about your choices when you become an adult. That is how Mirjana feels. As a teenager, she was very good at sports. She was even invited to take part in

the Winter Olympic Games. Instead, she chose to serve Jehovah full-time. More than 30 years later, she is still in the full-time service, together with her husband. She says that people who want fame, honor, power, and riches are never truly happy. She also says that the best goals are to serve God and to help people get to know him.

<sup>19</sup> You young ones really deserve to be commended because despite the difficulties you face, you focus your lives on serving Jehovah. You set spiritual goals, and you view the preaching work as one of the most important things in your life. Also, you do not allow the world to make you forget your goals. You can be sure that your hard work is not for nothing. You have brothers and sisters who love you and support you. So “commit to Jehovah whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.”

19. Why is it good to be focused on spiritual goals when you are young?



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