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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

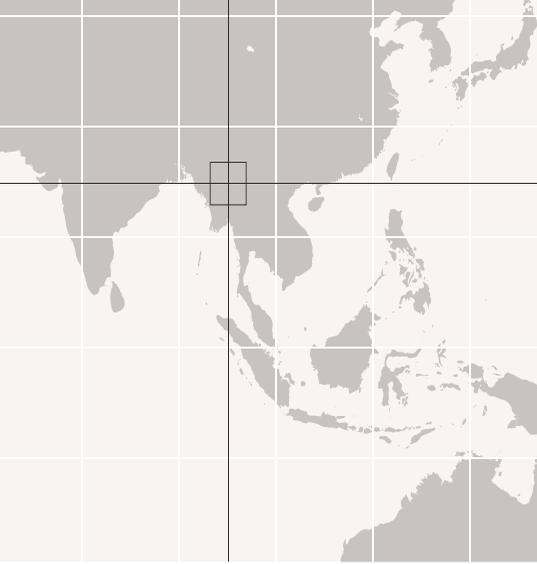
SIMPLIFIED EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
FEBRUARY 4–MARCH 3, 2019

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION





COVER IMAGE:

MYANMAR

Two sisters preach the good news
at a market in Taunggyi

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Honor “What God Has Yoked Together”

This article will discuss what the Bible says about marriage. How can we show that we honor marriage? And how can we apply what the Bible says about divorce and separation?

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57 Kindness—A Quality Expressed in Word and Action



SONGS:
145, 139

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER?**

How did God's promise to Abraham suggest a future paradise?

What prophecies in the book of Isaiah suggest that there will be a future paradise on earth?

What shows that Jesus and the criminal next to him did not go to Paradise on the day that they died?

“See You in Paradise!”

“You will be with me in Paradise.”

—LUKE 23:43.

MANY brothers and sisters from different countries had come to Seoul, Korea, for a convention. As they were leaving the stadium, the local Witnesses gathered around them. It was a very emotional scene as many of them waved and called to one another:

1, 2. What different ideas do people have about paradise?

“See you in Paradise!” What paradise do you think they were talking about?

² People today have different ideas about paradise. Some say that paradise is just a fantasy. Others say that paradise is any place where they are happy. A starving man who sits at a large table full of food may feel that he is in paradise. Many years ago, a woman who saw a beautiful valley full of wildflowers was so impressed that she exclaimed, “Oh, what a paradise!” That place is still called Paradise today, even though it gets more than 15 meters (50 feet) of snow each year. What do you think Paradise is? Do you hope that it will come?

³ The Bible talks about a paradise that existed in the past and a paradise that will exist in the future. We read about Paradise for the first time in the very first book of the Bible. In the Catholic *Douay Version*, which was translated from Latin, Genesis 2:8 says: “The Lord God had planted a **paradise of pleasure from the beginning: wherein he placed man whom he had formed.” (Bold ours.) The Hebrew text says the garden of Eden. The word “Eden” means “Pleasure,” and that garden truly was a pleasant place. It was absolutely beautiful, with plenty of food and peace between humans and animals.—Genesis 1:29-31.**

3. When is Paradise first mentioned in the Bible?

⁴ The Hebrew word for “garden” is translated *pa-ra’dei·sos* in Greek. The *Cyclopaedia* by M’Clintock and Strong says that when a Greek person heard the word *pa·ra’dei·sos*, he would imagine a beautiful, spacious park protected from anything that could cause harm, with impressive trees producing a variety of fruit and clear streams with grassy banks where herds of antelope and sheep could graze.—Compare Genesis 2:15, 16.

⁵ Jehovah put Adam and Eve in that kind of garden, a paradise. But because they disobeyed Jehovah, they lost the privilege of living in Paradise, both for themselves and for their children. (Genesis 3:23, 24) Even though there were no longer any humans living in that Paradise, it seems that it still existed until the Flood of Noah’s day.

⁶ Some may wonder, ‘Will there ever be Paradise on earth again?’ What do the facts show? If you hope to live with your loved ones in Paradise, do you have good reasons for your hope? Can you explain why we can be sure that there will be a paradise in the future?

4. Why can we refer to the garden of Eden as a paradise?

5, 6. Why did Adam and Eve lose the privilege of living in Paradise, and what may some wonder?

EVIDENCE OF A FUTURE PARADISE

⁷ The best place to find the answers to questions about Paradise is in the Bible, because this book comes from Jehovah, the one who created the original Paradise. Consider what God told his friend Abraham. God said that he would multiply Abraham's offspring "like the grains of sand on the seashore." Then Jehovah made this very important promise to Abraham: "By means of your offspring all nations of the earth will obtain a blessing for themselves because you have listened to my voice." (Genesis 22:17, 18) Later, God repeated that same promise to Abraham's son and grandson. —Read Genesis 26:4; 28:14.

⁸ Nothing in the Bible suggests that Abraham thought that humans would get a final reward in a paradise in heaven. So when God promised that "all nations of the earth" would be blessed, Abraham would have thought that these blessings would be on the earth. But is this the only evidence in the Bible that shows that there would be a paradise on earth?

⁹ God inspired one of Abraham's descendants,

7, 8. (a) What promise did God make to Abraham? (b) What might God's promise have caused Abraham to think about?

9, 10. What later promises give us a reason to expect that there will be a future paradise?

David, to speak about a time in the future when “the wicked will be no more.” (Psalm 37:1, 2, 10) Instead, “the meek will possess the earth, and they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.” David also foretold: “The righteous will possess the earth, and they will live forever on it.” (Psalm 37:11, 29; 2 Samuel 23:2) How do you think these promises affected people who wanted to do God’s will? They had a reason to expect that someday only righteous people would be on the earth and that it would again become a paradise like the garden of Eden.

¹⁰ Over time, most Israelites who claimed to serve Jehovah rejected him and true worship. So God allowed the Babylonians to conquer his people, ruin their land, and take many of them captive. (2 Chronicles 36:15-21; Jeremiah 4:22-27) But God’s prophets foretold that his people would return to their homeland after 70 years. And those prophecies did come true. But they also have meaning for us today. As we discuss some of them, notice how they give us reasons to expect a future paradise on earth.

¹¹ **Read Isaiah 11:6-9.** God foretold through the

11. How was Isaiah 11:6-9 first fulfilled, but what question may we still ask?

prophet Isaiah that when the Israelites returned to their homeland, the land would be peaceful. No one would have to be afraid of being attacked by animals or people. Young and old would be safe. Does that remind you of the peaceful conditions that existed in the garden of Eden? (Isaiah 51:3) Isaiah also foretold that the whole earth, not just the nation of Israel, would “be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.” When would that happen? Clearly, this refers to the future.

¹² **Read Isaiah 35:5-10.** Notice that Isaiah again foretold that the Israelites returning from Babylon would not be attacked by animals or people. He said that their land would produce plenty of good food because there would be an abundance of water, just as there was in the garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:10-14; Jeremiah 31:12) Would the prophecy be fulfilled only in the time of those Israelites? Note that the prophecy also said that the blind, the lame, and the deaf would be cured. But this did not happen to the Israelites who returned from Babylon. Rather, God was indicating that he would heal all sickness in the future.

12. (a) What blessings did those returning from exile in Babylon experience? (b) What shows that Isaiah 35:5-10 would also be fulfilled in the future?

13 Read Isaiah 65:21-23. When the Jews returned to their homeland, they did not find comfortable houses or cultivated fields and vineyards. But because God blessed them, things changed in time. Imagine how happy the people were when they built houses and lived in them and when they enjoyed the delicious food they had grown!

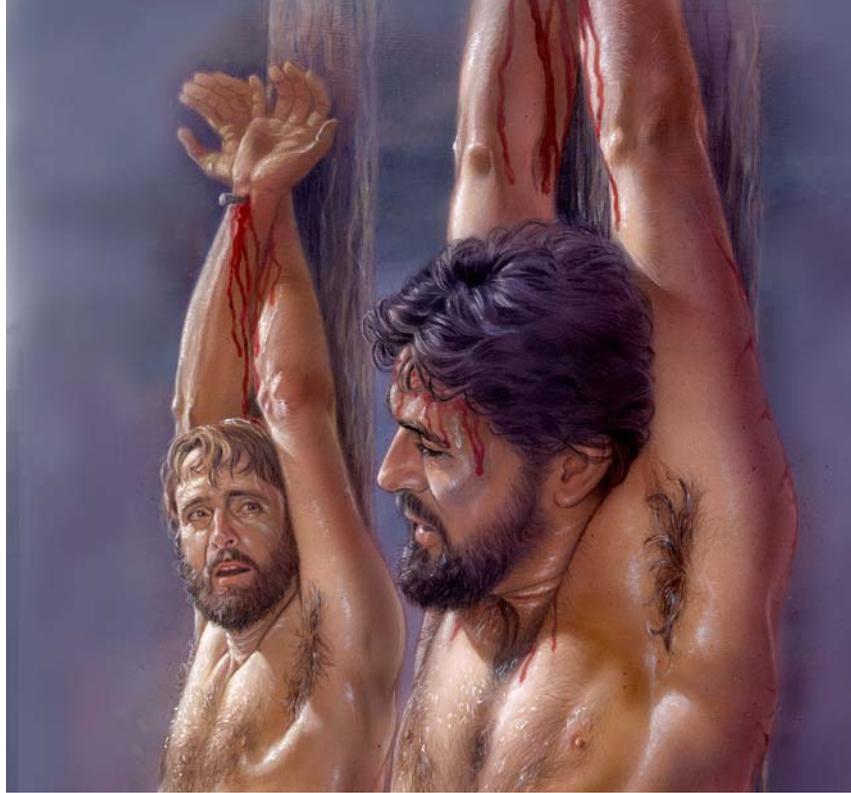
14 Notice that according to this prophecy, our days “will be like the days of a tree.” Some trees live for thousands of years. To live that long, humans would have to be very healthy. And if they could live in the peaceful, beautiful environment that Isaiah foretold, it really would be wonderful, a paradise! And that prophecy will be fulfilled!

15 Think about how the promises that we have just discussed show that there will be a future paradise. The whole earth will be full of people blessed by God. No one will have to worry about being attacked by animals or violent people. The blind, deaf, and lame will be cured. People will build their own homes and enjoy growing their own food. They will live longer than the trees. Yes, the Bible provides evidence

13, 14. How was Isaiah 65:21-23 fulfilled when the Israelites returned from Babylon, but what part of that prophecy still needs to be fulfilled? (See opening picture.)

15. What are some of the blessings mentioned in the book of Isaiah?

How would
the promise that
Jesus made about
Paradise be
fulfilled?
(See paragraphs 15, 16)



that such a paradise is coming. But some people we speak with might say that these prophecies do not really mean there will be a paradise on earth. What would you tell them? What valid reason do you have to look forward to a real paradise on earth? The greatest man who ever lived, Jesus, gave us a valid reason.

YOU WILL BE IN PARADISE!

¹⁶ Although Jesus was innocent, he was convicted and hung on a stake to die, with a Jewish criminal

16, 17. When did Jesus speak about Paradise?

on each side of him. One of them realized that Jesus was a king and said: “Jesus, remember me when you get into your Kingdom.” (Luke 23:39-42) The promise that Jesus made to that criminal affects your future. Jesus’ words are recorded at Luke 23:43. Some scholars put a comma before the word “today” and translate these words: “Truly I say to you, today with me you will be in Paradise.” There are different opinions about where the comma should be placed in that sentence. But what did Jesus mean when he said “today”?

¹⁷ In many modern languages, commas are used to help make the meaning of a sentence clear. But in the earliest available Greek manuscripts, punctuation was not always used. So we may wonder: Was Jesus saying, “I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise”? Or was he saying, “I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise”? Translators place the comma either before or after “today” according to what they think Jesus meant, and you can find either rendering in Bibles today.

¹⁸ However, remember what Jesus told his followers about his death. He said: “The Son of man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.” He also said: “The Son of man is going to

18, 19. What helps us understand what Jesus meant?

be betrayed into men's hands, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised up." (Matthew 12:40; 16:21; 17:22, 23; Mark 10:34) The apostle Peter reports that this happened. (Acts 10:39, 40) So Jesus did not go to Paradise on the day he and that criminal died. The Bible says that Jesus was "in the Grave" for parts of three days, until God resurrected him.—Acts 2:31, 32.* (See footnote.)

¹⁹ So Jesus used the expression "Truly I say to you today" to introduce his promise to the criminal. That was a common way of speaking even in Moses' time. Moses once said: "These words that I am commanding you today must be on your heart."—Deuteronomy 6:6; 7:11; 8:1, 19; 30:15.

²⁰ A Bible translator from the Middle East said: "The emphasis in this text is on the word 'today' and should read, 'Truly I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.' The promise was made on that

* Professor C. Marvin Pate wrote that many scholars believe that when Jesus said "today," he meant that he would die and be in Paradise on that day, or within 24 hours. Professor Pate added that the problem with this view is that it does not agree with other facts in the Bible. For example, the Bible says that Jesus was in the Grave after he died and that he later went to heaven.—Matthew 12:40; Acts 2:31; Romans 10:7.

20. What supports our understanding of what Jesus said?

day and it was to be fulfilled later.” That translator also said that this is how people speak in that area and implies that “the promise was made on a certain day and would surely be kept.” A Syriac version from the fifth century translates this verse: “Amen, I say to thee to-day that with me thou shalt be in the Garden of Eden.” We should all be encouraged by that promise.

²¹ When Jesus spoke to that criminal about Paradise, he did not mean a heavenly paradise. How do we know that? One reason is that the criminal did not even know that Jesus had made a covenant with his faithful apostles to rule with him in heaven. (Luke 22:29) Also, the criminal had not even been baptized. (John 3:3-6, 12) So when Jesus made this promise to the criminal, he must have been talking about an earthly paradise. Years later, the apostle Paul spoke about a vision of a man “caught away into paradise.” (2 Corinthians 12:1-4) Even though Paul and the other apostles were chosen to go to heaven and rule with Jesus, Paul was talking about a future paradise.* (See footnote.) Would that paradise be on earth? Can you be there?

* See “Questions From Readers” in the standard edition of this issue.

21. What did not happen to that criminal, and why?

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

²² Remember that David spoke about a time when “the righteous will possess the earth.” (Psalm 37:29; 2 Peter 3:13) David was referring to a time when all people on the earth would obey God’s righteous principles. The prophecy at Isaiah 65:22 says: “The days of my people will be like the days of a tree.” This shows that people who serve Jehovah in his new world will live for thousands of years. Can you expect that? Yes, because according to Revelation 21:1-4, God will bless mankind, and one of those blessings is that “death will be no more.”

²³ What the Bible teaches about Paradise is clear. Adam and Eve lost the privilege of living forever in Paradise, but the earth will be a paradise again. As God promised, he will bless the people on the earth. David said that the meek and the righteous will inherit the earth and live forever on it. And the prophecies in the book of Isaiah help us to look forward to the time when we will enjoy life on a beautiful paradise earth. When will that be? When Jesus’ promise to the criminal is fulfilled. You can be in that Paradise. At that time, what the brothers and sisters said at the convention in Korea will come true: “See you in Paradise!”

22, 23. What can you hope for?



SONGS:
131, 132

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER?**

How do Jehovah and Jesus view marriage?

What is the only Scriptural reason for divorce, but why might some decide not to divorce?

What advice should a person who is thinking about separating from his or her marriage mate consider?

Honor “What God Has Yoked Together”

“What God has yoked together, let no man put apart.”—MARK 10:9.

ALL OF us want to honor Jehovah. He deserves our honor, and he promises to honor us in return. (1 Samuel 2:30; Proverbs 3:9; Revelation 4:11) He also wants us to honor other people, such as government officials. (Romans 12:10; 13:7)

1, 2. What should Hebrews 13:4 motivate us to do?

But there is a certain area where we especially need to show honor. That is in marriage.

² The apostle Paul wrote: “Let marriage be honorable among all, and let the marriage bed be without defilement.” (Hebrews 13:4) Paul was not just making a general statement about marriage. He was telling Christians that they had to honor marriage, that is, view it as precious. Is that how you view marriage, especially your own marriage if you are married?

³ If you view marriage as precious, you are following a very good example. Jesus himself honored marriage. When the Pharisees asked him about divorce, he mentioned what God had said about the first marriage: “For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother, and the two will be one flesh.” Jesus added: “What God has yoked together, let no man put apart.”—Read **Mark 10:2-12**; **Genesis 2:24**.

⁴ Jesus agreed that God was the one who created marriage and that marriage should be permanent. When God performed the first marriage, he

3. What important advice about marriage did Jesus give? (See opening picture.)

4. What was Jehovah’s purpose for marriage?

did not tell Adam and Eve that they could get a divorce. Instead, his purpose was for “the two” to remain united in marriage forever.

THINGS THAT TEMPORARILY CHANGED MARRIAGE

⁵ You know, however, that when Adam sinned, many things changed. One of those changes was that humans began to die, and that change affected marriage. The apostle Paul explained to Christians that death ends a marriage and that the surviving mate is free to remarry.—Romans 7:1-3.

⁶ The Law that God gave to Israel provided details about marriage. For example, an Israelite man was allowed to have more than one wife. This custom had existed even before God gave the Law. However, the Law protected women and children from being mistreated. For example, if an Israelite man married a slave and later took a second wife, he still had to care for the needs of his first wife as he did before. God required that he continue to protect and care for her. (Exodus

5. How did death affect marriage?

6. What does the Law of Moses teach us about God’s view of marriage?

21:9, 10) We do not follow the Law of Moses today. But it teaches us that God viewed marriage as very precious. This certainly helps us to honor marriage.

⁷ What did the Law say about divorce? Although Jehovah never intended for a husband and a wife to get divorced, the Law did allow an Israelite man to divorce his wife if “he found something indecent about her.” (Read Deuteronomy 24:1.) The Law did not describe what could be considered “something indecent.” However, it must have been something shameful or very serious and not just a small offense. (Deuteronomy 23:14) Sadly, by Jesus’ day, many Jews were divorcing their wives “on every sort of grounds.” (Matthew 19:3) We certainly do not want to develop that kind of attitude.

⁸ In the prophet Malachi’s day, it was common for a man to divorce his first wife, perhaps to marry a younger woman who did not serve Jehovah. But God made it very clear how he viewed divorce. He said: “I hate divorce.” (Malachi 2:14-16) God’s view of marriage had not changed since

7, 8. (a) What did the Law say about divorce according to Deuteronomy 24:1? (b) How does Jehovah view divorce?

the beginning, when he said that a man “will stick to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24) And Jesus supported his Father’s view of marriage when he said: “What God has yoked together, let no man put apart.”—Matthew 19:6.

THE ONLY REASON FOR DIVORCE

⁹ Some might ask, ‘Is there ever a reason for a Christian to divorce and remarry?’ Notice what Jesus said: “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if ever a woman after divorcing her husband marries another, she commits adultery.” (Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18) Clearly, Jesus honored marriage, and he wanted others to do so. If a man divorced his faithful wife and remarried, he would be committing adultery. The same would be true if a woman divorced her faithful husband. That is because divorce alone does not end a marriage. God still considers the couple to be “one flesh.” Jesus also said that if a man divorced his innocent wife, she would be in danger of committing adultery. How could that be? Well, back then, a divorced

9. What do Jesus’ words at Mark 10:11, 12 mean?

woman might feel that she had to remarry for financial reasons. Such a marriage would be the same as adultery.

¹⁰ Jesus taught that there is one reason that a person could get a divorce: “I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of **sexual immorality**, and marries another commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:9) He made the same point in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5:31, 32) Both times, Jesus referred to “sexual immorality.” Sexual immorality may include sins such as adultery, prostitution, sex relations between unmarried individuals, homosexuality, and bestiality. If, for example, a married man commits sexual immorality, his wife can decide whether to divorce him or not. If she divorces him, God would no longer view them as married.

¹¹ Notice that Jesus did not say that if a married person committed sexual immorality, the innocent mate **had to divorce**. For example, a wife

10. What is the only reason a Christian could divorce and be free to remarry?

11. Why might a Christian decide not to get a divorce even if his or her mate commits sexual immorality?

God's Response to Israel's Adultery

Both Israel and Judah became unfaithful to Jehovah. They made alliances with pagan nations and worshipped false gods. God condemned them for “committing adultery with stones and with trees.” (Jeremiah 2:13, 20; 3:1-3, 9; compare Ezekiel 16:28; James 4:4.) When they would not change and continued like “a wife who commits prostitution,” God made a choice. He said: “When I saw that, I sent unfaithful Israel away with a full certificate of divorce because of her adultery.”—Jeremiah 3:6-8.

might choose to stay married to her husband even though he committed sexual immorality. Why? She might still love him and might be willing to forgive him and work with him to improve their marriage. Also, if she got a divorce and did not remarry, she would have certain difficulties. For example, what about her material and sexual needs? Would she be lonely? How would a divorce affect her children? Would it be more difficult to raise them in the truth? (1 Corinthians 7:14) Clearly, an innocent mate who chose to obtain a divorce would have serious difficulties.

The Only Scriptural Reason for Divorce

Twice, Jesus said that the only reason a person can divorce his or her mate and be free to remarry is *por-nei'a*. What does that Greek word mean? It refers to sexual activity between people who are not Scripturally married to each other. It can include sexual relations, oral sex, anal sex, or manipulating another person's genitals in a sexual way.—See *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2006, “Questions From Readers.”

¹² The prophet Hosea's experience teaches us much about how God views marriage. God told Hosea to marry a woman named Gomer, who would become “a woman of prostitution” and would have “children of prostitution.” Gomer and Hosea had a son. (Hosea 1:2, 3) Later, Gomer had a daughter and another son, likely from another man. Even though Gomer committed adultery more than once, Hosea stayed married to her. Eventually, she left Hosea and became a

12, 13. (a) What happened in Hosea's marriage? (b) Why did Hosea take Gomer back, and what can we learn from his marriage?

slave. Still, Hosea bought her back. (Hosea 3: 1, 2) Jehovah used Hosea to show how He repeatedly forgave Israel after the nation was unfaithful to Him and worshipped other gods. What can we learn from Hosea's marriage?

¹³ If a Christian's mate committed immorality, the innocent Christian would have to make a decision. Jesus said that the innocent mate would have a valid reason to get a divorce and then be free to remarry. However, it would not be wrong if the innocent one chose to forgive his or her mate. Hosea took back Gomer. After she returned to Hosea, he told her that she could not have sexual relations with any other man. Hosea did "not have relations" with Gomer for a while. (Hosea 3:3, footnote) But eventually, Hosea must have had relations with his wife again. This represented how God was willing to accept the Israelites back and continue his relationship with them. (Hosea 1:11; 3:3-5) What does this teach us about marriage today? If an innocent mate begins to have sexual relations with the guilty mate again, that would show that the innocent one has forgiven him or her. (1 Corinthians 7:3, 5) Then there would no longer be a valid reason for

divorce. After that, the husband and the wife should work together and help each other to view marriage as God does.

HONOR MARRIAGE EVEN WHEN THERE ARE SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES

¹⁴ All Christians should honor marriage as Jehovah and Jesus do. However, at times some do not do this, because we are all imperfect. (Romans 7:18-23) So it should not shock us that some of the early Christians had serious difficulties in their marriages. Paul wrote that “a wife should not separate from her husband.” But sometimes that did happen.—**Read 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11.**

¹⁵ Paul did not explain what situations caused couples to separate. But we do know that the problem was not, for example, that the husband had committed sexual immorality. Otherwise, the wife would have had a reason to divorce and remarry. Paul wrote that a wife who separated from

14. According to 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, what may happen in a marriage?

15, 16. (a) What should be the goal of a couple when there are problems in their marriage, and why? (b) How does this apply if a mate does not serve Jehovah?



How can a couple save their marriage?
(See paragraph 15)

her husband should “remain unmarried or else be reconciled with her husband.” So God still viewed that couple as married. Paul said that whatever problems or difficulties a couple might have, if neither of them had committed sexual immorality, their goal should be to reconcile, that is, to solve their problems and stay together. They could ask the elders for help. The elders would not take sides, but they could offer practical advice from the Bible.

¹⁶ However, what if a Christian is married to someone who does not serve Jehovah? When there are problems in their marriage, is separation acceptable? As already mentioned, the Bible says that sexual immorality is a valid reason for divorce. But the Bible does not state reasons why a couple may separate. Paul wrote: “If a woman has an unbelieving husband and he is agreeable to staying with her, let her not leave her husband.” (1 Corinthians 7:12, 13) This applies today too.

¹⁷ However, there have been some cases where “an unbelieving husband” has shown that he is not “agreeable to staying” with his wife. For example, he might be extremely physically abusive, even to the point that she feels that her health or life is in danger. He might refuse to support her and the family materially or make it impossible for her to serve God. In such cases, a Christian wife may personally decide that, despite what her husband might say, he is not “agreeable to staying” with her and that it is necessary to separate. But other Christians in similar situations

17, 18. Why have some Christians stayed married even when they have serious difficulties?

have decided to stay with their mate. They have endured and tried to work on improving the marriage. Why would they decide to do that?

¹⁸ If a couple separated in such a situation, they would still be married and would have the difficulties we mentioned earlier. The apostle Paul also gave another reason for a couple to stay together. He wrote: “The unbelieving husband is sanctified in relation to his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in relation to the brother; otherwise, your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.” (1 Corinthians 7: 14) Many Christians decided to stay with their mate who did not serve Jehovah even though the situation was very difficult. They were especially glad that they made such a sacrifice when later their mate became one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. —Read 1 Corinthians 7:16; 1 Peter 3:1, 2.

¹⁹ Jesus gave counsel about divorce, and the apostle Paul gave advice about separation. Both wanted God’s servants to honor marriage. Around the world today, there are plenty of suc-

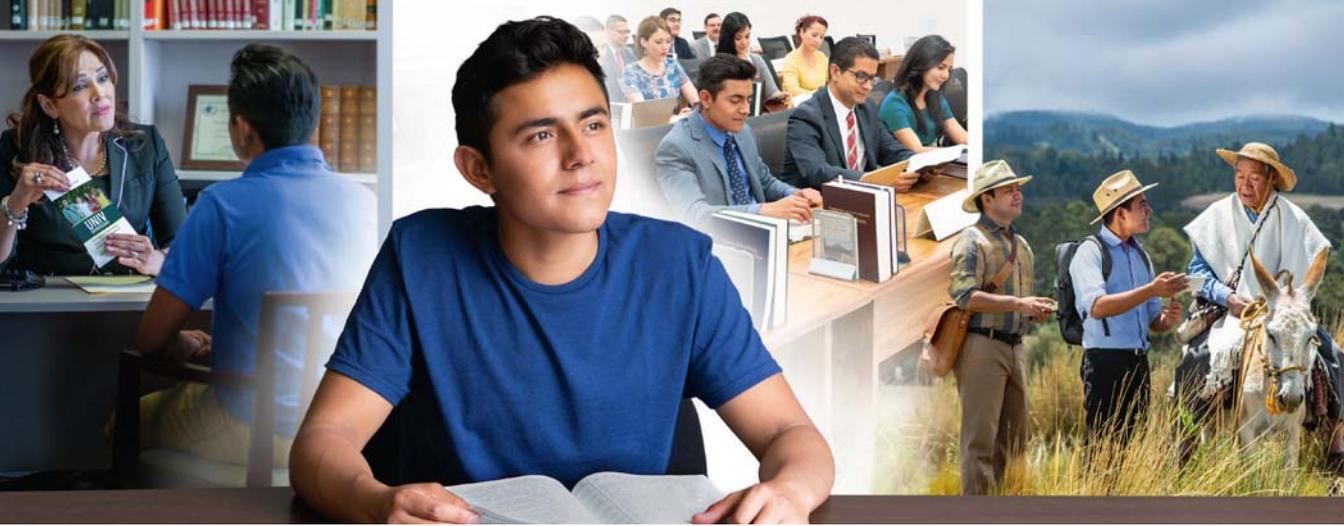
19. Why are there so many successful marriages in the Christian congregation?

cessful marriages in the Christian congregation. You can probably find many happy couples in your congregation, where loyal husbands love their wives and loving wives respect their husbands. All of them show that marriage can be honorable. And we can be happy that millions of husbands and wives are proving God's words true: "For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and he will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh."—Ephesians 5:31, 33.

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

“One flesh”:

Jehovah used these words to describe the bond between a husband and a wife, which is the closest human relationship. God intended for a husband and a wife to stay together forever



SONGS:
135, 39

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER?**

Why does wisdom
come only from
Jehovah?

Why should you
be aware of your
spiritual need?

What other
“good things”
does Jehovah give
you, and how do
you feel about
them?

Young Ones, Your Creator Wants You to Be Happy

*“He satisfies you with good things all
your life.”—PSALM 103:5.*

IF YOU are young, you probably get a lot of advice about your future. Teachers, guidance counselors, or others may tell you that you need to get a higher education or a career that

1, 2. Why is it wise to listen to your Creator when choosing what to do with your life? (See opening pictures.)

will help you make lots of money. But Jehovah gives you different advice. Of course, he wants you to work hard at school so that you will be able to make a living and support yourself. (Colossians 3:23) But he also knows that when you are young, you need to make important decisions that will affect your future. So he provides principles to guide you and help you to live your life in a way that will please him during these last days.—Matthew 24:14.

² Remember that Jehovah knows everything. He knows what will happen in the future, and he knows exactly how close the end of this system is. (Isaiah 46:10; Matthew 24:3, 36) Jehovah also knows you. He knows what will make you happy and what will make you unhappy. Human advice may sound good, but if it is not based on God's Word, it is not truly wise.—Proverbs 19:21.

WISDOM COMES ONLY FROM JEHOVAH

³ Bad advice has been around for a long time. Satan was the first one to give humans bad advice. He told Eve that she and Adam would be

3, 4. How did listening to bad advice affect Adam and Eve and their children?

happier if they decided for themselves how to live. (Genesis 3:1-6) But Satan was selfish! He wanted Adam and Eve, as well as their future children, to obey and worship him, not Jehovah. But Satan had not done anything for humans. It was Jehovah who had given them everything they had. He gave them each other, a beautiful garden to live in, and their perfect bodies that could last forever.

⁴ Sadly, Adam and Eve disobeyed God. By doing so, they cut themselves off from the One who gave them life. The results were tragic. Like flowers cut off from a plant, Adam and Eve slowly grew old and died. Their children suffered too, and that includes all of us. (Romans 5:12) Most people today ignore what God says and do just what they want to do. (Ephesians 2:1-3) What are the results? The Bible says that “there is no wisdom” when people oppose Jehovah.—Proverbs 21:30.

⁵ Jehovah was confident that there would be people, including many young ones, who would want to know him and serve him. (Psalm 103:17,

5. What confidence did God have in humans, and was he right?

18; 110:3) These young people are very precious to Jehovah! Are you one of them? Then you are certainly enjoying many “good things” from God, and this adds to your happiness in life. (Read Psalm 103:5; Proverbs 10:22) We will discuss four of these things. They are spiritual food, good friends, meaningful goals, and true freedom.

JEHOVAH GIVES YOU SPIRITUAL FOOD

⁶ Animals do not have a spiritual need, that is, they do not feel the need to know their Creator. But we do. (Matthew 4:4) When we listen to God, we gain insight, wisdom, and happiness. Jesus said: “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need.” (Matthew 5:3) God gives us the Bible and uses “the faithful and discreet slave” to provide publications that help us to strengthen our faith. (Matthew 24:45) We call these publications spiritual food because they nourish our faith and make our relationship with Jehovah stronger. We enjoy a rich variety of spiritual food!—Isaiah 65:13, 14.

6. Why should you care for your spiritual need, and what does Jehovah provide to help you?

7 Spiritual food can give you wisdom and the ability to think clearly, which can protect you in many ways. (Read Proverbs 2:10-14.) For example, these qualities will help you to recognize lies, like the lie that there is no Creator or the lie that money and material things will make you happy. These qualities will also help you to avoid desires or habits that will hurt you. So do all that you can to become wise and to think clearly. Then you will see for yourself that Jehovah loves you and wants what is best for you.—Psalm 34:8; Isaiah 48:17, 18.

8 Soon, every part of Satan’s world will be destroyed. Only Jehovah will be able to protect us and provide the things we need, which may include our very next meal. (Habakkuk 3:2, 12-19) So now is the time to draw close to God and strengthen your trust in him. (2 Peter 2:9) If you do, then no matter what happens around you, you will feel like David, who said: “I keep Jehovah before me constantly. Because he is at my right hand, I will never be shaken.”—Psalm 16:8.

7. How will spiritual food from God help you?

8. Why should you draw close to God now, and how will this benefit you in the future?

JEHOVAH GIVES YOU THE BEST FRIENDS

⁹ When you first meet someone who is not in the truth, how much do you really know about him? You may know his name and what he looks like, but probably not much more. It is very different, though, when you first meet someone who is in the truth. You know that he loves Jehovah. You know that Jehovah saw something good in him and invited him to be part of his family of worshippers. (Read John 6:44.) No matter where that person comes from or how he was raised, you already know a lot about him, and he knows a lot about you!

¹⁰ As soon as you meet another Witness, you know that you already have the most important things in common. You know that even if you speak different languages, you speak the same “pure language” of truth. (Zephaniah 3:9) This means that you both believe in God, you live by the same moral standards, and you have the same hope for the future. These things help you to

9. (a) As we read at John 6:44, what does Jehovah do? (b) What is special about meeting other Witnesses?

10, 11. What do Jehovah’s people have in common, and how does this affect you?

trust each other and build a strong friendship that will last forever.

¹¹ So when you worship Jehovah, you can truly say that you have the best friends. You have friends all around the world, even if you have not even met them yet! Can you think of anyone other than Jehovah's people who enjoy this precious gift?

JEHOVAH HELPS YOU SET MEANINGFUL GOALS

¹² Read Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:1. Do you have any goals that you are trying to reach? Maybe you set a goal to read the Bible every day or to give better comments or parts at the meetings. Or perhaps you are trying to use the Bible more effectively in the ministry. How do you feel when you notice that you are improving or when others tell you that you are? You probably feel very happy, and you should! Why? Because you are doing what Jehovah wants you to do, as Jesus did.—Psalm 40:8; Proverbs 27:11.

¹³ When you focus on your service to Jehovah,

12. What meaningful goals can you set?

13. How is serving God better than focusing on goals in this world?



Jehovah wants you to have the best kind of friends
and to set meaningful goals
(See paragraphs 9-12)

you are doing work that will make you happy and give you purpose in life. Paul advised: “Be steadfast, immovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 15:58) But when people focus on goals in this world, like making money or becoming famous, they are not really happy. Even if they are

successful, they often feel empty inside. (Luke 9:25) We learn this from the example of King Solomon.—Romans 15:4.

¹⁴ Solomon, who was one of the richest and most powerful men who ever lived, did an experiment. He said to himself: “Let me try out pleasure and see what good comes.” (Ecclesiastes 2:1-10) So Solomon built luxurious houses, designed gorgeous gardens and parks, and did whatever he wanted. Did he feel satisfied and happy? When Solomon looked back on everything he had done, he said: “I saw that everything was futile.” He added: “There was nothing of real value.” (Ecclesiastes 2:11) Will you learn this lesson from Solomon’s experiment?

¹⁵ Some people learn lessons in life only by making mistakes and suffering the bad results. Jehovah does not want this to happen to you. He wants you to listen to him and obey him. This takes faith, but you will never regret the choices you make in life because of your faith. And Jehovah will never forget “the love you showed for his

14. What can you learn from Solomon’s experiment?

15. Why do you need faith, and how will it help you, as we learn from Psalm 32:8?

name.” (Hebrews 6:10) So work hard to build strong faith. Then you will make good choices in life and see for yourself that your heavenly Father wants what is best for you.—Read Psalm 32:8.

GOD GIVES YOU TRUE FREEDOM

¹⁶ Paul wrote: “Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom.” (2 Corinthians 3:17) Jehovah loves freedom, and he created you to love freedom too. But he wants you to use your freedom in a wise way that will protect you. Maybe some of your peers look at pornography, are sexually immoral, risk their lives in extreme sports, or abuse drugs or alcohol. At first, these things may seem fun or exciting, but they often lead to bad results, such as disease, addiction, or even death. (Galatians 6:7, 8) Young people who are involved in these things may think that they are free, but they are not.—Titus 3:3.

¹⁷ On the other hand, obedience to Jehovah is good for us. It is good for our health and makes

16. Why should we value freedom and use it in a wise way?

17, 18. (a) How does obedience to God make us truly free? (b) In what way were Adam and Eve more free than humans today?

us truly free. (Psalm 19:7-11) And when you use your freedom in a wise way, that is, when you choose to obey God's perfect laws and principles, you show both God and your parents that you are a responsible person. Your parents will probably trust you more and give you more freedom. And Jehovah promises that soon he will give all of his faithful servants perfect freedom, which the Bible calls "the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Romans 8:21.

¹⁸ This is the kind of freedom that Adam and Eve enjoyed. In the garden of Eden, there was only one thing that God told them not to do. They should not eat the fruit of one particular tree. (Genesis 2:9, 17) Do you think that God was being unfair or too strict by giving them that law? Of course not! Think about how many laws humans have made and forced others to obey. But Jehovah gave Adam and Eve only one law.

¹⁹ Jehovah is very wise in the way that he treats us. Instead of giving us many laws, he patiently teaches us to obey the law of love. He teaches us to live by his principles and to hate what is bad.

19. What are Jehovah and Jesus teaching us that will help us become free?

(Romans 12:9) In the Sermon on the Mount, his Son, Jesus, helped us to understand why people do bad things. (Matthew 5:27, 28) And in the new world, as King of God's Kingdom, Jesus will keep teaching us to view right and wrong as he does. (Hebrews 1:9) Jesus will also make us perfect in our mind and body. Imagine what it will be like when we are not even tempted to do bad things and we do not suffer because of being imperfect. Then, at last, we will enjoy "the glorious freedom" that Jehovah promises.

²⁰ In the new world, our freedom will still have limits. In what way? We will always need to be motivated by our love for God and for others. When we are guided by love, we are imitating Jehovah. Even though Jehovah has complete freedom, he chooses to let love guide everything he does, including the way he treats us. (1 John 4: 7, 8) So it makes sense that we can be truly free only when we imitate God.

²¹ Are you grateful for all the good things that

20. (a) How does Jehovah use his freedom? (b) How can you imitate him?

21. (a) How did David feel about Jehovah? (b) What will we discuss in the next article?

Jehovah has given you? He has given you spiritual food, good friends, meaningful goals, the hope of perfect freedom in the future, and many other wonderful gifts. (Psalm 103:5) You probably feel like David did when he prayed in the words found at Psalm 16:11: “You make known to me the path of life. In your presence is abundant joy; there is happiness at your right hand forever.” In the next article, we will discuss other precious truths from Psalm 16. These will help you see how you can have the best life ever!

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

Spiritual need:

The need that humans have to know their Creator and worship him. Unlike animals, humans want to know the answers to life’s big questions, such as “What is the purpose of life?” and “What will happen in the future?”

Spiritual food:

All the provisions that help us learn about Jehovah and understand his Word. Jehovah is using the faithful and discreet slave to provide publications that help us become better Christians and live happier lives



Young Ones, You Can Have a Satisfying Life

*“You make known to me
the path of life.”—PSALM 16:11.*

TONY grew up without a father. He was a high school student, but he was not very interested in school. In fact, he was thinking of leaving without graduating. On the weekends, Tony would go

1, 2. How does Tony’s experience show that it is possible to make changes in life?

SONGS:
133, 89

**HOW CAN PSALM 16
HELP YOU TO . . .**

make Jehovah your
“portion”?

choose good
friends and set
meaningful goals?

learn to love what is
good and hate what
is bad?

to the movies or spend time with his friends. He was not violent or a drug addict, but he did not have a purpose in life. He was not even sure if God existed. One day, Tony met two of Jehovah's Witnesses and expressed his doubts about God to them. They gave him two brochures to read—*Was Life Created?* and *The Origin of Life—Five Questions Worth Asking*.

² The next time they visited Tony, his thinking had changed completely. He had read the brochures so much that they were folded and wrinkled. Tony told the Witnesses: "There has to be a God." He began to study the Bible, and little by little his view of life changed. Before he started studying, Tony was not a good student, but he became one of the best students in his school! Even the school principal was amazed. He said to Tony: "You have made major improvements in your attitude and your grades. Is that because of your association with Jehovah's Witnesses?" Tony said that it was and shared what he was learning with the principal. He graduated from high school and today is a regular pioneer and a ministerial servant. Tony is so happy that he now has a loving Father, Jehovah!—Psalm 68:5.

OBEY JEHOVAH, AND YOU WILL HAVE SUCCESS

³ Tony's experience reminds us that Jehovah really cares about young people. He wants you to have a truly successful and satisfying life, so he advises you to remember "your Grand Creator in the days of your youth." (Ecclesiastes 12:1) This is not always easy, but it is not impossible. With God's help, you can have a successful life both while you are young and later when you are an adult. To help us understand this better, we will discuss what helped the Israelites to conquer the Promised Land and what gave David the power to conquer the giant Goliath.

⁴ When the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, what instructions did Jehovah give them? Did he tell them to become better soldiers or to train for war? No! (Deuteronomy 28:1, 2) He told them to obey him and trust in him. (Joshua 1:7-9) This advice might not have made sense to humans, but it was actually the best advice for the Israelites. Over and over again, Jehovah helped his

3. What advice does Jehovah give to young people?

4, 5. What valuable lesson can we learn from how the Israelites conquered Canaan and how David conquered Goliath? (See opening pictures.)

people to conquer the Canaanites. (Joshua 24:11-13) It takes faith to obey God, but that faith always leads to success. This was true in the past, and it is true today.

⁵ Goliath was a mighty warrior. He was almost three meters (9.5 feet) tall, and he carried dangerous weapons. (1 Samuel 17:4-7) David, on the other hand, had only a sling and his faith in God. A person without faith would have thought that David was a fool to try to fight Goliath! But in reality, Goliath was the fool.—1 Samuel 17:48-51.

⁶ In the previous article, we discussed four things that can make us happier and more successful in life. We learned that we need to care for our spiritual need, make good friends who love God, set meaningful goals, and value the freedom God gives us. In this article, we will discuss more ways we can benefit from doing these good things. To do this, let us consider some principles we find in Psalm 16.

CARE FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL NEED

⁷ A spiritually-minded person has faith in God

6. What will we discuss in this article?

7. (a) How would you describe a spiritually-minded person?
(b) What was David's "portion," and how did this affect him?

and tries to see things as God does. He lets Jehovah guide his life and is determined to obey him. (1 Corinthians 2:12, 13) David is a good example of a spiritually-minded person. He sang: “Jehovah is my portion.” (Psalm 16:5) David was thankful for his “portion,” his close relationship with God, and he took refuge in him. (Psalm 16:1) As a result, he could say: “My whole being is joyful.” Nothing made David happier than his close friendship with Jehovah!—Read Psalm 16:9, 11.

⁸ People who focus on money or pleasure can never have as much joy as David had. (1 Timothy 6:9, 10) A brother in Canada says: “True satisfaction comes, not from what we can get out of life, but from what we give to the Giver of every good gift, Jehovah God.” (James 1:17) If you develop faith in Jehovah and serve him, you will have a truly meaningful and satisfying life. So, what can you do to make your faith stronger? You need to spend time with Jehovah by reading his Word, observing the beautiful things he created, and thinking about his qualities, including his love for you.—Romans 1:20; 5:8.

8. What are some things that can make your life truly satisfying?

⁹ Sometimes God shows his love for us by correcting us when we need it, just as a loving father does. David valued this correction and said: “I will praise Jehovah, who has given me advice. Even during the night, my innermost thoughts correct me.” (Psalm 16:7) David meditated on God’s thoughts and made them part of his own thinking. He allowed God’s thoughts to mold him, that is, he let them change him so that he could be a better person. When you do the same, your love for God and your desire to please him will grow, and you will become a mature Christian. A sister named Christin says that when she does research and meditates on what she reads, she feels that Jehovah had those things written just for her!

¹⁰ When you are spiritually-minded, you will see the world and its future as God does. Jehovah gives you this extraordinary knowledge and insight. Why? He wants you to know what is important in life, to make good decisions, and to look forward to the future without fear! (Read Isaiah 26:3.) A brother named Joshua, who lives in the United States, says that if you stay close to Jeho-

9. How can you allow God’s Word to mold you?

10. As we learn from Isaiah 26:3, how will being spiritually-minded help you?

vah, you will see clearly what is important and what is not so important.

MAKE TRUE FRIENDS

¹¹ Read Psalm 16:3. David knew how to find good friends. He chose as his friends those who loved Jehovah, and this gave him “great delight.” He described his friends as “holy ones” because they tried to follow Jehovah’s clean moral standards. Another psalmist felt the same way about choosing friends and wrote: “I am a friend of all who fear you and of those who keep your orders.” (Psalm 119:63) As we discussed in the previous article, you too can find many good friends among those who love and obey Jehovah. And of course, your friends do not need to be the same age as you.

¹² David did not choose only those who were the same age as he was to be his friends. Can you name one of David’s close friends? You might think of Jonathan. The friendship between David and Jonathan is one of the most beautiful ones we can read about in the Bible. But did you know that

11. How did David choose his friends?

12. Why were David and Jonathan good friends?

Jonathan was about 30 years older than David? So why were they such good friends? Their friendship was based on their faith in God. They also respected each other and valued each other's good qualities, such as the courage they each showed when they fought God's enemies.—1 Samuel 13:3; 14:13; 17:48-50; 18:1.

¹³ Like David and Jonathan, we can have “great delight” when we are friends with those who love Jehovah and have faith in him. Kiera, who has served God for years, says, “I’ve made friends with people from around the world, people of many different backgrounds and cultures.” When you do the same, you will see for yourself how the Bible and holy spirit make us one worldwide family of worshippers.

SET MEANINGFUL GOALS

¹⁴ **Read Psalm 16:8.** For David, serving God was the most important thing. If you imitate David when you set goals and always think about what Jehovah wants for you, then your life will be sat-

13. How can you make more friends? Give an example.

14. (a) How can you set meaningful goals in life? (b) What do some young ones say about their goals?

isfying. A brother named Steven says: “Working toward a goal, accomplishing it, and then looking back on the improvements I have made brings me satisfaction.” A young brother from Germany who now serves in another land says: “When I’m old, I don’t want to look back on my life and see that everything I did was just about me.” Do you feel the same way? Then use your abilities and talents to bring honor to God and to help other people. (Galatians 6:10) Set goals in Jehovah’s service, and ask Jehovah to help you reach those goals. You can be sure that he will answer your prayer! —1 John 3:22; 5:14, 15.

¹⁵ What are some goals you could set? What about trying to give comments in your own words at the meetings? Or why not make it your goal to pioneer or serve at Bethel? You could also try to learn a new language so that you can use it to share the good news with more people. Barak is a young brother in full-time service who says: “Waking up every day knowing that I’m giving all my strength to Jehovah is a feeling that no other activity can produce.”

15. What goals might you set for yourself? (See the box “Some Goals to Think About.”)



SOME GOALS TO THINK ABOUT

- Get more out of Bible reading
- Learn how to start conversations in the ministry
- Dedicate your life to Jehovah and get baptized
- Become a ministerial servant
- Improve as a teacher
- Start a Bible study
- Become an auxiliary or a regular pioneer
- Serve at Bethel
- Learn another language
- Serve where the need is greater
- Help with Kingdom Hall construction or disaster relief work

CHERISH THE FREEDOM THAT GOD GIVES YOU

¹⁶ Read Psalm 16:2, 4. As we learned in the previous article, when we live by God’s laws and principles, we become truly free. We learn to love what is good and hate what is bad. (Amos 5:15) David said that Jehovah was his “Source of goodness.” Goodness is moral excellence, or virtue. Jehovah is good in everything he does, and anything good we have comes from him. David worked hard to imitate God and to love the things Jehovah loves. But David also learned to hate what God says is bad. One of these things is idolatry, which is the worship of anyone or anything other than Jehovah. Idolatry degrades humans and takes the glory that belongs to Jehovah and gives it to someone or something else.—Isaiah 2:8, 9; Revelation 4:11.

¹⁷ In Bible times, sexual immorality was often part of false worship. (Hosea 4:13, 14) Many people liked false worship because they enjoyed being

16. How did David feel about Jehovah’s laws and principles, and why?

17, 18. (a) What did David say about the bad results of false worship? (b) What causes people today to “multiply their sorrows”?

immoral, but did such worship make them happy? Not at all! David said that those who worship false gods “multiply their sorrows.” Those people even sacrificed their children to false gods! (Isaiah 57:5) Jehovah hated their cruelty. (Jeremiah 7:31) If you had lived in those days, you would have been very grateful that your parents worshipped Jehovah!

¹⁸ Today, many false religions accept sexual immorality, including homosexuality. An immoral lifestyle may make people feel that they are free, but in reality they “multiply their sorrows.” (1 Corinthians 6:18, 19) Have you noticed this? So, young ones, listen to your heavenly Father. Prove to yourself that it is good for you to obey God. Think carefully about the bad results of immorality. You will see that no temporary pleasure is worth the harm it causes. (Galatians 6:8) Joshua, whom we mentioned earlier, says: “We can use our freedom any way we want, but misusing it isn’t satisfying.”

¹⁹ Jesus said: “If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth,

19, 20. What blessings will come to young ones who have faith in Jehovah and obey him?

and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31, 32) Thanks to Jehovah, we are free from false religion, ignorance, and superstition. In the future, we look forward to having “the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Romans 8:21) You can enjoy some of that freedom even now when you follow Christ’s teachings. In this way, you will come to “know the truth” not only by learning about it but also by living it!

²⁰ Young ones, cherish the freedom that God gives you. Use it wisely. It will help you make decisions now that can give you the best future. One young brother says: “Using freedom wisely as a young person really helps when later you are faced with bigger decisions, such as finding a suitable job or choosing whether to marry or to remain single for a time.”

²¹ In this old system, even what people call the good life is short. No human knows what tomorrow will bring. (James 4:13, 14) So the best thing you can do is make choices that will help you gain “the real life”—everlasting life in God’s wonderful new world. (1 Timothy 6:19) Jehovah does not

21. How can you gain “the real life”?

force anyone to serve him. It is up to each one of us to decide what we will do. So make Jehovah your “portion” by working every day to draw closer to him, and cherish all the “good things” he gives you. (Psalm 103:5) Be sure that Jehovah can give you abundant joy and happiness forever! —Psalm 16:11.

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

A successful life:

For many people who do not know Jehovah, success means making a lot of money, having many material comforts, or being well-known for their talents or abilities. For Jehovah’s people, success means using our life to bring glory to God

A satisfying life:

The interesting and meaningful life you can have in Jehovah’s service. You will learn so many things, experience more blessings than you ever imagined, and make real friends. You will enjoy using your talents and abilities to serve your Creator and others. When you look back, you will be happy about the decisions you have made and the goals you have set for yourself

KINDNESS

A Quality Expressed in Word and Action

LOVE
JOY
PEACE
PATIENCE
KINDNESS
GOODNESS
FAITH
MILDNESS
SELF-CONTROL

WHEN others treat us in a kind way, it really makes us feel good. It comforts us to know that they care about us. Since we are grateful when others are kind to us, how can we learn to be kind?

A kind person truly cares about others and shows it by what he says and does. He is not simply polite. Rather, he treats others in a kind way because he loves them and understands how they feel. More important, kindness is part of the fruitage of God's holy spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Jehovah wants us to be kind, so let us see how he and his Son have shown kindness and how we can follow their example.

JEHOVAH IS KIND TOWARD ALL

Jehovah is kind toward all, even those who are “unthankful and wicked.” (Luke 6:35) For example, Jehovah “makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the

good and makes it rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Matthew 5:45) Even people who do not believe that Jehovah is the Creator can still benefit from his kindness and have some happiness in life.

A great example of Jehovah’s kindness is what he did for Adam and Eve. Shortly after they sinned, “they sewed fig leaves together and made loin coverings for themselves.” However, Jehovah knew that outside the garden of Eden, they would need clothing that could give them more protection, because the ground was cursed and full of “thorns and thistles.” So Jehovah kindly made “long garments from skins” for them.—Genesis 3:7, 17, 18, 21.

Even though Jehovah is kind to “both the wicked and the good,” he is especially kind toward his faithful servants. For example, during the time when Zechariah was a prophet, an angel was concerned because the Israelites had stopped building Jehovah’s temple in Jerusalem. Jehovah listened to what the angel had to say and answered him with “kind and comforting words.” (Zechariah 1:12, 13) Jehovah treated the prophet Elijah in a similar way. There was a time when the prophet felt so depressed and alone that he asked Jehovah to put him to death. Jehovah

showed that he cared about Elijah's feelings and sent an angel to strengthen him. He also assured the prophet that he was not alone. Jehovah's kindness strengthened Elijah to continue in his assignment. (1 Kings 19:1-18) But of all of Jehovah's servants, who would you say has imitated his remarkable kindness in the best way?

JESUS WAS VERY KIND

When Jesus was on earth, people could see how kind he was. He was never harsh and never tried to force others to do what he wanted. He cared about others and said: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. . . . For my yoke is kindly." (Matthew 11:28-30) Because he was so kind, people followed him wherever he went. Out of pity, Jesus gave them food, healed them, and taught them "many things" about his Father.—Mark 6:34; Matthew 14:14; 15:32-38.

Jesus understood people's feelings and treated them in a kind and thoughtful way. In fact, even when it was not convenient for him, he kindly helped everyone who came to him. (Luke 9:10, 11) Think about what happened with the woman who had a flow of blood. She wanted to be healed, so she touched Jesus' clothing. But according to the Law of Moses, she

should not have done that because she was unclean. (Leviticus 15:25-28) How did Jesus react? He did not speak to her in an angry way. He could see that she was frightened, and he felt pity for her because she had suffered for 12 years. He told her: “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed from your grievous sickness.” (Mark 5:25-34) Jesus was truly kind!

A KIND PERSON HELPS OTHERS

In the examples we discussed, we learned that if we are kind, we will do things to help others. Jesus emphasized how important this is when he told the parable about the good Samaritan. A Jew had been robbed, beaten, and left to die on the side of the road. A Samaritan who was passing by felt pity for this man, even though Samaritans and Jews hated one another. Kindness motivated him to help the injured man. He cleaned his wounds and took him to an inn. The Samaritan paid the innkeeper to care for the Jew and even offered to pay for any other expenses.—Luke 10:29-37.

Kindness will motivate us to be thoughtful and encouraging not just in what we do but also in what we say. The Bible says: “Anxiety in a man’s heart depresses him, but a good word cheers [him] up.”

(Proverbs 12:25, footnote) When kindness and goodness motivate us to say encouraging things to others, we will make them feel happier.* (See footnote.) Our kind words will show that we care about them and will make it easier for them to endure problems in life.—Proverbs 16:24.

HOW TO BECOME KIND

All of us have the ability to show kindness because God created all humans in his image. (Genesis 1:27) For example, Julius, the Roman army officer who was responsible for taking the apostle Paul to Rome, “treated Paul with kindness and permitted him to go to his friends and enjoy their care” at the city of Sidon. (Acts 27:3) When Paul and others were shipwrecked during this journey, the people of Malta showed them “extraordinary kindness” and even made a fire for them to get warm. (Acts 28:1, 2) These people did a good thing. However, to make Jehovah happy, a person must be kind at all times, not just occasionally.

Jehovah wants kindness to be a part of our personality and way of life. That is why he tells us to “clothe” ourselves with kindness. (Colossians 3:12)

* We will discuss the quality of goodness in a future article in this series on the fruitage of God’s holy spirit.

But it is not easy to be kind all the time. Why not? Perhaps we do not show kindness because we are shy, insecure, or a little selfish. Or we may find it hard to be kind to those who treat us badly. But if we pray for holy spirit and try to imitate Jehovah, he can help us to become truly kind.—1 Corinthians 2:12.

How can we know what to work on to become more kind? Ask yourself: ‘Do I listen carefully to others and try to understand how they feel? Do I notice when others need help? When was the last time I was kind to someone who is not a family member or a close friend?’ Then set goals, such as getting to know more about the people around you, especially those in the congregation. In this way you can find out what difficulties they have and what they need. Next, try to treat people as kindly as you would like to be treated. (Matthew 7:12) Finally, ask Jehovah for help, and he will bless your efforts to become a kind person.—Luke 11:13.

HOW KINDNESS AFFECTS PEOPLE

When the apostle Paul listed the things that made him a good minister, one of them was kindness. (2 Corinthians 6:3-6) People liked Paul because he said and did kind things, and they could feel that he cared about them. (Acts 28:30, 31) In a similar way,

if we are kind, others may want to learn more about the truth. When we are kind to all people, even those who treat us badly, it may touch their heart and they may change their attitude. (Romans 12:20) Perhaps after a while they will even want to learn about the Bible.

In Paradise, everyone will be kind to one another. Resurrected ones will be treated with kindness, some of them for the first time. This will surely motivate them to be kind to others. In fact, anyone who is unkind and does not want to help others will not be allowed to live under God's Kingdom. Only people who are loving and kind will live forever in Paradise. (Psalm 37:9-11) It will be a truly safe and peaceful world! However, even before that time comes, we can benefit from being kind. How?

BENEFITS FROM BEING KIND

The Bible says: "A kind man benefits himself." (Proverbs 11:17) People like to be with a person who is kind, and they usually treat him kindly too. Jesus said: "With the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return." (Luke 6:38) So it is easy for a kind person to find good friends and to keep them.

The apostle Paul told those in the congregation in Ephesus to “become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another.” (Ephesians 4:32) When all in the congregation are kind and compassionate, the congregation becomes strong and united. We would never want to be critical of our brothers, gossip about them, or say something harsh or hurtful even as a joke. Instead, what we say should always be helpful and encouraging. (Proverbs 12:18) As a result, the congregation will serve Jehovah joyfully.

As we have learned, kindness is a quality that is shown in everything we say and do. And when we are kind, we imitate our loving and generous God, Jehovah. (Ephesians 5:1) This makes our congregation stronger and motivates others to serve him too. So let us do all we can so that others can see that Jehovah’s Witnesses are kind people!



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