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Are You Fully Accomplishing Your Ministry?

“Keep preaching the good news, fully accomplish your ministry.”—2 TIM. 4:5, ftn.

SONG 57

Preaching to All Sorts of People

PREVIEW

We have been commissioned to preach the good news of the Kingdom and to make disciples. This article will consider how we can fully accomplish our ministry, even if we have challenging personal circumstances. We will also learn how we can make our preaching work more effective and rewarding.

CHRIST JESUS commanded his followers to “go, . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matt. 28:19) All of God’s faithful servants want to learn how they can “fully accomplish” this ministry that they have been given to do. (2 Tim. 4:5) After all, this work is more important, more worthwhile, and more urgent than any other occupation in life. However, it can be a challenge to spend as much time in the ministry as we would like.

² There are other important activities that demand our time and energy. We may have to work secularly many hours a day to provide the necessities of life for ourselves and our family. We may struggle with other family responsibilities, sickness, depression, or the aches and pains of advancing age. How can we fully accomplish our ministry while coping with such challenging circumstances?

³ If our circumstances limit the amount of time we can spend in Jehovah’s service, we should not feel discouraged. Jesus knew that not every one of us would be able to produce the same amount of

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1. What do all of God’s servants want to do, and why? (See cover picture.)
 2. What challenges do we face in accomplishing our ministry?
 3. What can we conclude from Jesus’ words found at Matthew 13:23?

Kingdom fruitage. (Read Matthew 13:23.) Jehovah highly values everything we do in his service as long as we are doing our best. (Heb. 6:10-12) On the other hand, we may feel that our circumstances would allow us to do more. In this article, we will examine how we can make the ministry our priority in life, keep our life simple, and improve in our preaching and teaching skills. First, though, what does it mean to accomplish our ministry fully?

⁴ Simply put, to accomplish our ministry fully, we must have as full a share as possible in the preaching and teaching work. But more is involved than the amount of time. Our motive is important to Jehovah. Because we love Jehovah and our neighbor, we work whole-souled in our Christian ministry.* (Mark 12:30, 31; Col. 3:23) Serving God whole-souled means giving of ourselves, using our strength and energies to the best of our ability in his service. When we appreciate the privilege of doing the preaching work, we try to share the good news with as many people as we can.

* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** Our **Christian ministry** includes various aspects of preaching and teaching, construction and maintenance of theocratic facilities, and disaster relief work.—2 Cor. 5:18, 19; 8:4.

4. What does it mean to accomplish our ministry fully?

⁵ Imagine a young man who enjoys playing the guitar. He is happy to play music whenever he can. Eventually, he obtains work playing the guitar in a local café on weekends. However, his income does not cover his expenses. So he works as a cashier in a grocery store Monday through Friday. Although he spends most of his time in the grocery store, his heart is in his music. He yearns to improve his skill and to be a full-time musician. Even so, he enjoys every available opportunity to play music, brief though it may be.

⁶ In a similar way, you may be limited in the amount of time you can devote to the preaching work. Yet, that is what you love to do. You strive to improve your ability to reach people's hearts with the good news. With many demands on your time, you may wonder how you can make the preaching work your priority.

HOW TO MAKE THE MINISTRY YOUR PRIORITY

⁷ Jesus set an outstanding example in his attitude toward the ministry. He made talking about God's Kingdom the main focus of his life. (John 4:34, 35)

5-6. Illustrate how a person with limited time can give priority to the ministry.

7-8. How can we imitate Jesus' attitude toward the ministry?

He walked hundreds of miles to preach to as many as possible. He seized every opportunity to speak to people in public places and in their homes. Jesus' whole life revolved around the ministry.

⁸ We can imitate Christ by creating opportunities to talk about the good news whenever and wherever possible. We are willing to sacrifice personal comfort to engage in the evangelizing work. (Mark 6: 31-34; 1 Pet. 2:21) Some in the congregation are able to serve as special, regular, or auxiliary pioneers. Others have learned to speak another language or have moved to an area where there is a need for more preachers. However, much of the evangelizing work is done by regular Kingdom publishers, who do the best they can. Whatever the case, Jehovah does not ask more of us than we can give. He wants all of us to enjoy our sacred service as we declare “the glorious good news of the happy God.”—1 Tim. 1:11; Deut. 30:11.

⁹ The apostle Paul set a good example in making the ministry the most important activity in his life. When he was in Corinth during his second missionary journey, he was low on funds and had to spend

9. (a) How did Paul give priority to the preaching work even when he had to do secular work? (b) What does Acts 28:16, 30, 31 show about Paul's attitude toward his ministry?

some time making tents. However, Paul did not view tentmaking as his primary occupation. He worked at this trade to support himself in the ministry so that he could declare the good news to the Corinthians “without cost” to them. (2 Cor. 11:7) Although Paul had to do some secular work, he continued to give priority to the ministry, and he preached on every Sabbath. After his circumstances improved, Paul was able to give more attention to preaching. He “began to be intensely occupied with the word, witnessing to the Jews to prove that Jesus is the Christ.” (Acts 18:3-5; 2 Cor. 11:9) Later, when he was under house arrest in Rome for two years, Paul witnessed to visitors and wrote letters. (Read Acts 28:16, 30, 31.) Paul was determined not to allow anything to interfere with his ministry. He wrote: “Since we have this ministry . . . , we do not give up.” (2 Cor. 4:1) Like Paul, even if we have to spend time in secular work, we can still make the Kingdom work the most important activity in life.

¹⁰ If our door-to-door preaching activity is limited by advancing age or debilitating health problems, we can enjoy other forms of the ministry. First-century evangelizers reached out to people

10-11. How can we fully accomplish our ministry if our health is limiting what we can do?



There are many ways that we can fully accomplish our ministry
(See paragraphs 10-11)

wherever they were. They took advantage of every opportunity to talk about the truth—from house to house, publicly, and informally—wherever people “happened to be on hand.” (Acts 17:17; 20:20) If we are unable to do much walking, we might be able to sit in a public area where we can preach to passers-by. Or we might be able to witness informally, write letters, or do telephone witnessing. Many publishers with severe limitations experience much joy and satisfaction in these other avenues of the preaching work.

¹¹ Despite health limitations, you can accomplish your ministry fully. Consider again the example of the apostle Paul. He said: “For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.” (Phil. 4:13) Paul needed that power when he got sick on one of his missionary trips. He explained to the Galatians: “It was because of a physical illness that I had my first opportunity to declare the good news to you.” (Gal. 4:13) Similarly, your health limitations may give you opportunities to declare the good news to others, such as to doctors, nurses, and health-care providers. Many of these people are at work when publishers may be calling at their homes.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR LIFE SIMPLE

¹² Jesus said: “The lamp of the body is the eye. If, then, your eye is focused [or “simple,” ftn.], your whole body will be bright.” (Matt. 6:22) What did he mean? He meant that we need to keep our life simple or focused on a single goal, or purpose, not being distracted or sidetracked from it. Jesus himself set the example by focusing his life on the ministry, and he taught his disciples to keep focused on serving Jehovah and on His Kingdom. We imitate

12. What does it mean to keep your eye “focused”?

Jesus by living a life that centers on the Christian ministry, “seeking first the Kingdom and [God’s] righteousness.”—Matt. 6:33.

¹³ One way to focus on our ministry is by simplifying our life so that we can spend more time helping others come to know and love Jehovah.* For example, could we adjust our secular working hours so that we can spend more time in the ministry during the week? Could we reduce some recreational activities that may be very time-consuming?

¹⁴ This is what one elder, Elias, and his wife did. He explains: “We could not pioneer at that time, but we had to start somewhere. So we took relatively small steps toward increasing our time in the ministry. For example, we reduced our expenses, cut back on what we now view as excessive recreational activities, and asked our employers for a more flexible schedule. As a result, we were able to participate in evening witnessing, conduct more Bible studies, and even share in the midweek field service twice a month. What a joy!”

* See the seven steps listed in the box “How to Simplify Your Life” in *The Watchtower* of July 2016, p. 10.

13. What can help us to focus on our Christian ministry?

14. What adjustments did one couple make in order to give more time and attention to the ministry?

Goals to Help Me Fully Accomplish My Ministry

- ▶ Practice a sample conversation from the current *Our Christian Life and Ministry—Meeting Workbook*
- ▶ Improve my ability to start conversations and witness informally
- ▶ Improve my skill in reading and explaining scriptures, making return visits, or demonstrating a Bible study
- ▶ Look for opportunities to introduce jw.org[®] and to show videos
- ▶ Increase my preaching activity during the circuit overseer’s visit or during the Memorial season
- ▶ Make my ministry, return visits, and Bible studies a matter of prayer

MY PERSONAL GOALS:

1.

2.

3.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR PREACHING AND TEACHING SKILLS

¹⁵ Another way to accomplish our ministry more fully is by improving our skills in the preaching work. People in some professions are required to receive ongoing training and education in order to improve their knowledge and skills. This is also true of Kingdom preachers. We need to continue learning how to be more skillful in our ministry.—Prov. 1:5; read 1 Timothy 4:13, 15.

¹⁶ How, though, can we continue to make progress in our ministry? By paying close attention to the instruction we receive at the weekly Life and Ministry Meeting. This meeting provides invaluable training to help us progressively improve our skills in the field service. For instance, when the chairman gives counsel to those who have presented student assignments, we can identify suggestions that can help us improve in our ministry. We can put those suggestions into practice the next time we share the good news with someone. We could ask our field service group overseer for help or work in

15-16. In line with 1 Timothy 4:13, 15, how can we keep improving our skills as evangelizers? (See also the box “Goals to Help Me Fully Accomplish My Ministry.”)



Applying what we learn at the midweek meeting will help us to make continual progress in our ministry
(See paragraphs 15-16)

the ministry with him or with another experienced publisher, a pioneer, or the circuit overseer. As we become more skilled at using each tool in the Teaching Toolbox, we will enjoy our preaching and teaching more.

¹⁷ How privileged we are that Jehovah allows us to be his “fellow workers”! (1 Cor. 3:9) When you “make sure of the more important things” and focus on the Christian ministry, you will “serve

17. What will you experience when you fully accomplish your ministry?

Jehovah with rejoicing.” (Phil. 1:10; Ps. 100:2) As one of God’s ministers, you can be confident that he will give you the power you need to accomplish your ministry no matter what challenges or limitations you may face. (2 Cor. 4:1, 7; 6:4) Whether your circumstances allow you to have a small or a great share in witnessing, you can “have cause for rejoicing” when you are whole-souled in your ministry. (Gal. 6:4) When you fully accomplish your ministry, you show your love for Jehovah and for your fellow man. “By doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.”—1 Tim. 4:16.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 13: A sister demonstrates a return visit during the midweek meeting. Afterward, as the meeting chairman gives counsel, she makes notes in her *Teaching* brochure. Later, on the weekend, she uses in the field ministry what she learned at the meeting.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Why should we want to accomplish our ministry fully?
- How can we keep our life simple and make the ministry our priority?
- How can we improve our skills in the ministry?

Imitate Jesus and Remain at Peace

“The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts.”—PHIL. 4:7.

SONG 113

Our Possession of Peace

PREVIEW

All of us must deal with problems that could rob us of peace. This article discusses three things that Jesus did and that we can do to remain at peace, even when we are enduring severe trials.

ON HIS final day as a human, Jesus was troubled. Soon he would suffer a cruel death at the hands of lawless men. But it was more than his impending death that was giving Jesus concern. He deeply loved his Father and wanted to please him. Jesus knew that if he proved faithful under the coming difficult test, he would contribute to the vindication of Jehovah's name. Jesus also loved people, and he knew that our future prospects for everlasting life would depend on his finishing his earthly course successfully.

² Even though Jesus was under great stress, he was at peace. "I give you my peace," he had told his apostles. (John 14:27) He had "the peace of God," the calmness and tranquility that result from a person's precious relationship with Jehovah. That peace put Jesus' mind and heart at rest.—Phil. 4:6, 7.

³ None of us will ever face the kind of pressure that Jesus had to endure, but all who follow Jesus will face trials. (Matt. 16:24, 25; John 15:20) And like Jesus, we will feel troubled at times. How can we prevent anxiety from dominating us and rob-

1-2. Why was Jesus troubled?

3. What will we examine in this article?

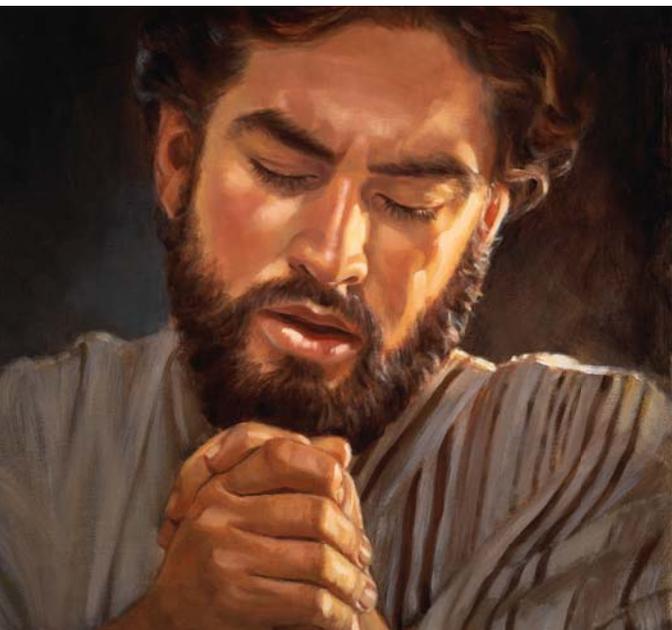
bing us of our peace of mind? Let us examine three things that Jesus did during his ministry on earth and see how we can imitate him when we face trials.

JESUS CONTINUED PRAYING

⁴ Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Jesus prayed often throughout the last day of his life on earth. When he instituted the commemoration of his death, he prayed over the bread and the wine.

4. With 1 Thessalonians 5:17 in mind, give some examples to show that Jesus prayed often during the last day of his life on earth.

We can remain at peace by praying
(See paragraphs 4-7)



(1 Cor. 11:23-25) Before leaving the place where they had held the Passover, he prayed with the disciples. (John 17:1-26) When he and the disciples arrived at the Mount of Olives that night, he prayed repeatedly. (Matt. 26:36-39, 42, 44) And the very last words Jesus spoke before dying were uttered in prayer. (Luke 23:46) Through prayer, Jesus included Jehovah in every major event on that momentous day.

⁵ One reason why Jesus could endure his trial was that he relied on his Father in prayer. The apostles, on the other hand, failed to persevere in prayer that night. As a result, their courage weakened when the hour of test arrived. (Matt. 26:40, 41, 43, 45, 56) When we face trials, we will remain faithful only if we follow Jesus' example and "pray continually." What can we pray for?

⁶ We can pray for Jehovah to "give us more faith." (Luke 17:5; John 14:1) We need faith because Satan will test all who follow Jesus. (Luke 22:31) How will faith help us to remain at peace even when we must deal with one challenge after another? When we have done all that we rea-

5. Why did the apostles' courage weaken?

6. How will faith help us to remain at peace?

sonably can to deal with a trial, faith will move us to leave the matter with Jehovah. Because we trust that he can handle matters better than we ever could, we have peace of mind and heart.—1 Pet. 5: 6, 7.

⁷ Prayer helps us to maintain our inner peace no matter what trials we face. Consider the example of Robert, a faithful elder who is now in his 80's. He says: "The counsel at Philippians 4:6, 7 has helped me to cope with many trials in my life. I have had to deal with financial problems. And I temporarily lost my privilege of serving as an elder." What has helped Robert to maintain inner peace? "I pray as soon as I start to feel anxious," he says. "I believe that the more frequently and intensely I pray, the more peaceful I feel."

JESUS ZEALOUSLY PREACHED

⁸ Read **John 8:29**. Even while being persecuted, Jesus had inner peace because he knew that he was making his Father happy. He remained obedient when it was difficult for him to do so. He loved his Father and built his whole life around serving

7. What did you learn from Robert's comments?

8. As stated at John 8:29, what is another reason why Jesus had inner peace?

Jehovah. Before he came to earth, he was God's "master worker." (Prov. 8:30) And while on earth, he zealously taught others about his Father. (Matt. 6:9; John 5:17) That work brought Jesus great joy. —John 4:34-36.

⁹ We can imitate Jesus by obeying Jehovah and "always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58) When we are "intensely occupied" in the preaching work, we are better able to put our troubles into perspective. (Acts 18:5) For example, those we meet in our ministry often face worse problems than we do. Yet, when they learn to love Jehovah and apply his counsel, their lives improve and they become happier. Each time we see that happen, we feel more confident that Jehovah will care for us. And that conviction helps us to retain our inner peace. A sister who has struggled all her life with depression and deep feelings of worthlessness found this to be true. "When I am busy in the ministry," she says, "I feel more emotionally stable and happy. I think it is because when I am in the field service, I feel closest to Jehovah."

9. How can being occupied in the preaching work help us to maintain our inner peace?



We can remain at peace by preaching
(See paragraphs 8-10)

¹⁰ Consider also the example of a sister named Brenda. Both she and her daughter are afflicted with multiple sclerosis. Brenda is confined to a wheelchair and has limited energy. She preaches from door to door when she can, but she witnesses primarily by writing letters. She says: “Once I mentally and emotionally accepted that my condition is not reversible in this system, I felt free to focus on my ministry. Witnessing, in fact, takes my

10. What did you learn from Brenda’s comments?

attention away from my anxieties. It forces me to concentrate on helping those I contact in our congregation's territory. And it constantly reminds me of the hope I have for the future."

JESUS ACCEPTED HELP FROM HIS FRIENDS

¹¹ Throughout Jesus' challenging ministry, the faithful apostles proved to be real friends to Jesus. They were living examples of the proverb that says: "There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." (Prov. 18:24) Jesus valued such friends. During his ministry, none of his fleshly brothers put faith in him. (John 7:3-5) At one point, his relatives even thought that he had gone mad. (Mark 3:21) By contrast, Jesus could say to the faithful apostles on the night before his death: "You are the ones who have stuck with me in my trials."—Luke 22:28.

¹² The apostles occasionally disappointed Jesus, but he looked past their faults and saw that they had faith in him. (Matt. 26:40; Mark 10:13, 14; John 6:66-69) On the last night with them before he was executed, Jesus said to these loyal men: "I have called you friends, because I have made

11-13. (a) How did the apostles and others prove to be real friends to Jesus? (b) What effect did Jesus' friends have on him?

known to you all the things I have heard from my Father.” (John 15:15) Without a doubt, Jesus’ friends were a great source of encouragement to him. The help they gave him in his ministry made Jesus’ heart overflow with joy.—Luke 10:17, 21.

¹³ In addition to the apostles, Jesus had other friends, men and women, who assisted him in the preaching work and in other practical ways. Some opened their homes to him so that he had somewhere to eat a meal. (Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1, 2) Others traveled with him and shared their belongings with him. (Luke 8:3) Jesus had good friends because he was a good friend to them. He did good things for them and was reasonable in what he expected from them. Jesus was perfect, but he appreciated the support his imperfect friends gave him. And they, no doubt, helped him retain his inner peace.

¹⁴ Good friends will help us to stay loyal to Jehovah. And the best way to make good friends is to be a good friend. (Matt. 7:12) For example, the Bible encourages us to expend ourselves in behalf of others, especially those who are “in need.” (Eph. 4:28) Can you think of someone in your

14-15. How can we make good friends, and how can they help us?



We can remain at peace by associating with good friends
(See paragraphs 11-15)

congregation whom you can help? Can you do the shopping for a housebound publisher? Can you provide a meal for a family who is struggling financially? If you know how to use the jw.org[®] website and *JW Library*[®] app, could you help others in your congregation to access the treasures found there? When we are absorbed in helping others, we are more likely to be happy.—Acts 20:35.

¹⁵ The friends we make will support us when we face trials, helping us to maintain our inner peace. Just as Elihu listened when Job spoke about his

trials, our friends help us by patiently listening as we put our concerns into words. (Job 32:4) We should not expect our friends to make decisions for us, but we are wise if we listen to their Bible-based advice. (Prov. 15:22) And just as King David humbly accepted the help of his friends, we should not be too proud to accept the help our friends offer when we are in need. (2 Sam. 17:27-29) Really, such good friends are a gift from Jehovah.—Jas. 1:17.

HOW TO REMAIN AT PEACE

¹⁶ **Read Philippians 4:6, 7.** Why does Jehovah tell us that we can receive the peace that he gives “by means of Christ Jesus”? Because we can gain lasting peace in our thinking and feelings only if we understand and have faith in the role that Jesus fulfills. For example, by means of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice, all of our sins can be forgiven. (1 John 2:12) What relief that thought brings to us! As King of God’s Kingdom, Jesus will undo any damage Satan and his system may inflict on us. (Isa. 65:17; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 21:3, 4) What hope that inspires in us! And even though Jesus has given us a

16. According to Philippians 4:6, 7, what is the only way that we can gain peace? Explain.

challenging assignment, he is with us, supporting us through the last days of this system. (Matt. 28: 19, 20) What courage that builds in us! Relief, hope, and courage—these are some of the solid foundation stones on which our peace of mind is built.

¹⁷ How, then, can you retain your peace of mind when you are shaken by severe trials? You can do so by imitating the things Jesus did. First, pray and persist in prayer. Second, obey Jehovah and preach zealously even when it is difficult to do so. And third, look to your friends to help you through trials. Then the peace of God will guard your mind and heart. And like Jesus, you will conquer any trial.—**Read John 16:33.**

17. (a) How can a Christian retain inner peace? (b) As promised at John 16:33, what will we be able to do?

WHAT ROLE DO THE FOLLOWING PLAY IN OUR MAINTAINING INNER PEACE?

■ Prayer

■ Preaching

■ Friends

SONG 41

Please Hear My Prayer

Uphold the Truth About Death

“We distinguish the inspired statement of truth from the inspired statement of error.”—1 JOHN 4:6.

SONG 73

Grant Us Boldness

PREVIEW

Satan and his demons have deceived people with lies about the condition of the dead. These lies have led to many unscriptural customs. This article will help you remain faithful to Jehovah when others try to pressure you to engage in such customs.

SATAN, “the father of the lie,” has deceived people since the start of human history. (John 8:44) Some of his lies include false teachings about death and about life after death. Those teachings form the basis for many popular customs and superstitions. As a result, a number of our brothers and sisters have had to “put up a hard fight for the faith” when someone in their family or community has died.—Jude 3.

² If you face such tests, what can help you to stand firm for what the Bible teaches about death? (Eph. 6:11) How can you comfort and strengthen a fellow Christian who may be under pressure to engage in customs that displease God? This article will discuss the guidance that Jehovah has given us. First, let us consider what the Bible says about death.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE DEAD

³ God did not intend for humans to die. But in order to live forever, Adam and Eve had to obey Jehovah, who gave them a simple command: “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

1-2. (a) In what ways has Satan deceived people? (b) What will we consider in this article?

3. What resulted from the first lie?

certainly die.” (Gen. 2:16, 17) Then Satan came on the scene. Speaking through a serpent, he said to Eve: “You certainly will not die.” Sadly, she believed the lie and ate the fruit. Later, her husband too ate the fruit. (Gen. 3:4, 6) In this way, sin and death entered the human family.—Rom. 5:12.

⁴ Adam and Eve died, just as God had said they would. But Satan did not stop lying about death. At some point in time, he began to introduce other lies. One of those lies is the teaching that the physical body dies but that some part of the person lives on, perhaps in the spirit realm. Variations of that lie

4-5. How has Satan continued to deceive humans?

Instead of sharing in customs that displease God,
comfort your relatives who have lost a loved one in death
(See paragraphs 1-2)



have deceived countless humans right down to our day.—1 Tim. 4:1.

⁵ Why are so many humans deceived? Satan's lies about death exploit the way we naturally feel about death. Because we were created to live forever, we do not want to die. (Eccl. 3:11) We consider death an enemy.—1 Cor. 15:26.

⁶ Despite Satan's efforts, the truth about death has not been kept hidden. In fact, more people than ever now know and proclaim what the Bible teaches about the condition of the dead and the hope for the dead. (Eccl. 9:5, 10; Acts 24:15) These truths comfort us, sparing us needless fear and uncertainty. For example, we do not fear the dead; nor do we fear for them. We know that they are not alive and cannot harm anyone. It is as if they were in a deep sleep. (John 11:11-14) We also know that the dead are not aware of the passing of time. So in the resurrection, even those who have been dead for centuries will view the time that elapsed as momentary, like a snap of the fingers.

⁷ Do you not agree that the truth about the condition of the dead is clear, simple, and logical? What a contrast to Satan's confusing lies! In addition to

6-7. (a) Has Satan succeeded in keeping the truth about the dead hidden? Explain. (b) How does Bible truth spare us needless fear?

misleading people, those lies also slander our Creator. To help us appreciate more fully the harm that Satan has caused, we will consider these questions: How have Satan's lies slandered Jehovah? How have they undermined belief in Christ's ransom sacrifice? How have they added to mankind's grief and suffering?

SATAN'S LIES HAVE CAUSED MUCH HARM

⁸ Satan's lies about the dead slander Jehovah. Those lies include the false teaching that the dead suffer fiery torment. Such teachings slander God! How so? In effect, they attribute to him, the God of love, the personality of the Devil. (1 John 4:8) How does that make you feel? More important, how does it make Jehovah feel? After all, he hates all forms of cruelty.—Read Jeremiah 19:5.

⁹ Satan's lies about death undermine belief in Christ's ransom sacrifice. (Matt. 20:28) Another satanic lie is that humans have an immortal soul. If that were true, everyone would live forever. Christ would not have had to give his life as a ransom

8. As shown at Jeremiah 19:5, how do Satan's lies about the dead slander Jehovah?

9. How do Satan's lies affect belief in Christ's ransom sacrifice that is described at John 3:16 and 15:13?

for us to gain everlasting life. Keep in mind that Christ's sacrifice is the greatest expression of love ever shown to the human family. (Read John 3:16; 15:13.) Imagine how Jehovah and his Son must feel about teachings that undermine that precious gift!

¹⁰ *Satan's lies add grief and suffering to mankind.* Parents who are grieving the death of a child may be told that God has taken the child, perhaps to be an angel in heaven. Does this satanic lie lessen their pain or add to it? The false teaching of hellfire has been used to justify torture, including the burning at the stake of those who opposed church teachings. According to a book on the Spanish Inquisition, some of those responsible for this cruelty may have believed that they were only giving heretics "a taste of what perpetual hellfire would be like" so that they would repent before dying and be saved from hellfire. In a number of lands, people feel compelled to pay homage to their dead ancestors, to honor them, or to seek a blessing from them. Others want to appease their ancestors in order to avoid some form of punishment. Sadly, beliefs based on satanic lies do not bring genuine comfort. Instead, they cause needless anxiety or even fear.

10. How have Satan's lies about death added grief and suffering to mankind?

HOW WE CAN UPHOLD BIBLE TRUTH

¹¹ Love for God and his Word strengthens us to obey Jehovah even when well-meaning relatives or friends try to pressure us to share in unscriptural practices regarding the dead. They may try to shame us, perhaps by saying that we did not love or respect the deceased. Or they might say that our behavior will cause the dead person to harm the living in some way. How can we uphold Bible truth? Consider how you can apply the following Bible principles.

¹² *Be resolved to “separate yourselves” from unscriptural beliefs and customs.* (2 Cor. 6:17) In a Caribbean nation, many believe that after a person dies, his “ghost” may stay around and punish those who mistreated him. The “ghost” may even “wreak havoc on a community,” says one reference. It is a custom in Africa to cover mirrors in the home of the deceased and turn pictures to face the wall. The reason? Some claim that the dead must not see themselves! As Jehovah’s servants, we certainly do not believe any myths or take part in any practices that promote Satan’s lies!—1 Cor. 10:21, 22.

11. How may well-meaning relatives or friends try to pressure us to go against God’s Word?

12. What customs regarding the dead are clearly unscriptural?



Careful Bible-based research and good communication with relatives who are not Witnesses can help you avoid problems (See paragraphs 13-14)

13 If you are unsure about a certain custom or practice, go to Jehovah in prayer, asking in faith for godly wisdom. (Read James 1:5.) Then follow up by doing research in our publications. If necessary, consult the elders in your congregation. They will not tell you what to do, but they can point you to relevant Bible principles, such as those discussed here. As you take these steps, you train your “powers of discernment,” and these powers will help you to “distinguish both right and wrong.”—Heb. 5:14.

13. If you are unsure about a certain custom, what should you do, as stated at James 1:5?

¹⁴ ***“Do all things for God’s glory. Keep from becoming causes for stumbling.”*** (1 Cor. 10:31, 32) When deciding whether to share in a custom or tradition, we should also think about how our decision may affect the consciences of others, especially fellow Christians. Never would we want to stumble someone! (Mark 9:42) Also, we want to avoid needlessly offending those who are not Witnesses. Love will move us to speak to them in a respectful way, which glorifies Jehovah. We certainly would not quarrel with people or ridicule their traditions. Remember, love is powerful! When we reflect it in a considerate and respectful manner, we may even soften the hearts of opposers.

¹⁵ ***Make it known in your community that you are one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.*** (Isa. 43:10) You will likely find it easier to handle emotionally charged situations if your relatives and neighbors know that you worship Jehovah God. Francisco, who lives in Mozambique, writes: “When my wife, Carolina, and I learned the truth, we told our family that we would no longer worship the dead. Our decision was tested when Carolina’s sister died. The local custom is

14. In what ways can we avoid stumbling people?

15-16. (a) Why is it wise to let others know what you believe? Give an example. (b) How do Paul’s words recorded at Romans 1:16 apply to us?

to bathe a corpse ceremonially. Then the closest relative must sleep for three days at the place where the bathwater was poured out. These customs are supposed to appease the spirit of the deceased. Carolina's family expected her to carry out the sleep duty."

¹⁶ How did Francisco and his wife respond? Francisco explains: "Because we love Jehovah and want to please him, we refused to participate in the custom. Carolina's family became very angry. They accused us of disrespecting the dead and said that the family would no longer visit or help us. Since we had earlier explained our beliefs to them, we did not discuss the matter with them while they were angry. Some relatives even defended us, saying that we had already explained our position. In time, Carolina's relatives calmed down, and we were able to make peace. In fact, some have even come to our house to ask for Bible literature." May we never be ashamed of the stand that we take in defense of the truth about death.—Read Romans 1:16.

COMFORT AND SUPPORT THOSE WHO GRIEVE

¹⁷ When a fellow Christian loses a loved one in

17. What can help us to be a true friend to a grieving fellow Christian?

death, we should try hard to be “a true friend . . . , a brother who is born for times of distress.” (Prov. 17:17) How can we be “a true friend,” especially if a grieving brother or sister is being pressured to engage in unscriptural practices? Consider two Bible principles that can help us to comfort the bereaved.

¹⁸ ***“Weep with those who weep.”*** (Rom. 12:15) We may find it hard to know what to say to someone who is overcome by grief. Sometimes our tears say more than our words. When Jesus’ friend Lazarus died, Mary, Martha, and others wept for their beloved brother and friend. Four days later when Jesus arrived, he too “gave way to tears,” even though he knew that he was about to resurrect Lazarus. (John 11:17, 33-35) Jesus’ tears reflected the feelings of his Father. They also confirmed Jesus’ love for the family, which no doubt comforted Mary and Martha. Similarly, when our brothers sense our love and concern, they know that they are not alone but are surrounded by caring and supportive friends.

¹⁹ ***“A time to be silent and a time to speak.”*** (Eccl. 3:7) Another way to comfort a grieving fellow

18. What moved Jesus to tears, and what can we learn from his example?

19. When comforting a grieving fellow Christian, in what ways can we apply Ecclesiastes 3:7?



**True friends comfort and support those
who have lost loved ones in death**
(See paragraphs 17-19)

Christian is simply to be a good listener. Allow your brother to pour out his heart, and do not be offended by “wild talk.” (Job 6:2, 3) He may be under added emotional stress because of pressure from relatives who are not Witnesses. So pray with him. Beg the “Hearer of prayer” to give him strength and clarity of mind. (Ps. 65:2) If circumstances permit, read the Bible together. Or read an appropriate article from our publications, such as an encouraging life story.

²⁰ What a privilege we have to know the truth about the dead and the wonderful future that awaits those in the memorial tombs! (John 5:28, 29) Thus, in word and deed, let us courageously uphold Bible truth and share it with others at every appropriate opportunity. The next article will look at another way that Satan tries to keep people in spiritual darkness—spiritism. We will see why we need to avoid practices and entertainment associated with that demonic trap.

20. What will we discuss in the following article?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 29: While a relative mourns the loss of her loved one, family members who are Witnesses give her comfort. **Page 34:** After researching funeral customs, a Witness family member kindly explains his belief to his relatives. **Page 38:** Elders in the Christian congregation give comfort and support to a Witness who has lost a loved one in death.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- How does knowing the truth about the dead comfort us?
- What harm has resulted from Satan's lies about death?
- How may we uphold the truth about death?

Accept Jehovah's Help to Resist Wicked Spirits

“We have a struggle . . . against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places.”—EPH. 6:12.

SONG 55

Fear Them Not!

PREVIEW

Jehovah has lovingly warned us about wicked spirits and the harm they can cause. How do wicked spirits try to mislead people? What steps can we take to resist wicked spirits? This article will consider how Jehovah helps us to avoid their influence.

ONE of the most heartwarming ways in which Jehovah shows his concern for us as his servants is by helping us to resist our enemies. Our main enemies are Satan and the demons. Jehovah warns us about these enemies, and he gives us what we need to resist them. (Read Ephesians 6:10-13.) When we accept Jehovah's help and rely on him completely, we can succeed in opposing the Devil. We can have the same kind of confidence that the apostle Paul had. He wrote: "If God is for us, who will be against us?"—Rom. 8:31.

² As true Christians, we are not fascinated with Satan and the demons. We focus most of our attention on learning about Jehovah and serving him. (Ps. 25:5) However, we do need to know the basic ways that Satan operates. Why? So that we can avoid being outwitted by him. (2 Cor. 2:11; ftn.) In this article, we will consider a major way in which Satan and the demons try to mislead people. We will also consider how we can resist them successfully.

HOW WICKED SPIRITS MISLEAD PEOPLE

³ A major way in which Satan and the demons try

1. As explained at Ephesians 6:10-13, what is one of the most heartwarming ways in which Jehovah shows his concern for us? Explain.

2. What will we consider in this article?

3-4. (a) What is spiritism? (b) How widespread is the belief in spiritism?

to mislead people is through spiritism. Those who practice spiritism claim to know or control things that humans cannot normally know or control. For example, some claim to be able to know the future by using divination or astrology. Others may act as though they were speaking to those who have died. Some practice witchcraft or magic, and they may try to cast a spell on another person.*

⁴ How widespread is belief in the power of spiritism? A survey conducted in 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean found that about a third of the people surveyed believe in magic, witchcraft, or sorcery, and nearly as many believe that it is possible to communicate with spirits. Another survey was conducted in 18 countries in Africa. There, on average, more than half of the people surveyed say that they believe in witchcraft. Of course, wherever we live, we must be on guard against spiritism. After all, Satan is seeking to mislead “the entire inhabited earth.”—Rev. 12:9.

* **EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED:** **Spiritism** refers to beliefs and practices connected with the demons. It includes the belief that the spirits of dead humans survive the death of the physical body and that they communicate with the living, especially through a person (a medium). Spiritism also includes such practices as witchcraft and divination. As used in this article, **magic** refers to practices associated with the occult, or the supernatural. It can include curses and the casting or breaking of spells. It does not refer to tricks using quick hand movements, which some people perform merely for entertainment.

⁵ Jehovah is “the God of truth.” (Ps. 31:5) So how does he feel about spiritism? He hates it! Jehovah told the Israelites: “There should not be found in you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, anyone who employs divination, anyone practicing magic, anyone who looks for omens, a sorcerer, anyone binding others with a spell, anyone who consults a spirit medium or a fortune-teller, or anyone who inquires of the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to Jehovah.” (Deut. 18:10-12) Christians are not under the Law that Jehovah gave to the Israelites. However, we know that his feelings about spiritism have not changed.—Mal. 3:6.

⁶ Jehovah warns us against spiritism because he knows that Satan uses it to harm people. Satan uses spiritism to promote lies—including the lie that the dead are alive in some other realm. (Read Ecclesiastes 9:5.) Satan also uses spiritism to keep people in fear and to turn them away from Jehovah. His aim is that people who practice spiritism will trust in wicked spirits instead of in Jehovah.

5. How does Jehovah feel about spiritism?

6. (a) How does Satan use spiritism to harm people? (b) According to Ecclesiastes 9:5, what is the truth about the condition of the dead?

HOW WE RESIST WICKED SPIRITS

⁷ As noted earlier, Jehovah tells us what we need to know so as to avoid being misled by Satan and the demons. Consider some practical steps that we can take in our fight against Satan and the demons.

⁸ *Read God's Word and meditate on it.* This is the main way we reject the lies that wicked spirits promote. God's Word is like a sharp sword that can cut through the lies that Satan promotes. (Eph. 6:17) For example, God's Word exposes the lie that the dead can communicate with the living. (Read Psalm 146:4.) It also reminds us that only Jehovah can reliably predict the future. (Isa. 45:21; 46:10) If we read God's Word and meditate on it regularly, we will be equipped to reject and hate the lies that wicked spirits want us to believe.

⁹ *Refuse to do anything connected with spiritism.* As true Christians, we never practice spiritism of any kind. For example, we do not visit spirit mediums or try to communicate with the dead in any other way. As discussed in the preceding article, we avoid funeral customs that are based on the belief that the dead are

7. What does Jehovah tell us?

8. (a) What is the main way we resist wicked spirits? (b) How does Psalm 146:4 expose Satan's lie about the dead?

9. What sort of spiritistic practices do we avoid?

still alive somewhere. And we do not use astrology or fortune-telling to try to learn about the future. (Isa. 8:19) We know that all such practices are very dangerous and that they could put us in direct contact with Satan and the demons.

¹⁰ *Get rid of objects related to the occult.* Some of the people who lived in Ephesus during the first century were involved with spiritism. When they learned the truth, they took drastic action. “Quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody.” (Acts 19:19) These individuals were serious about resisting wicked spirits. Their books about magic cost a lot of money. But instead of giving those books away or selling them to others, they destroyed them. They were more concerned about pleasing Jehovah than about how much money the books were worth.

¹¹ How can we imitate the example of those first-century Christians? It would be wise to get rid of anything we may have that is connected with the occult. This includes amulets, charms, or other objects that people wear or own to try to protect themselves from wicked spirits.—**Read 1 Corinthians 10:21.**

10-11. (a) What did some in the first century do when they learned the truth? (b) According to 1 Corinthians 10:21, why should we imitate the example of the early Christians, and how can we do so?



Imitate the early Christians by getting rid of anything you may have that is connected with the occult and by rejecting spiritistic entertainment

(See paragraphs 10-12)



¹² ***Examine your entertainment carefully.*** Ask yourself: ‘Do I read books, magazines, or articles on the Internet about the occult? What about the music I listen to, the movies and TV shows I watch, or the video games I play? Does any of my entertainment involve spiritism? Does it feature such things as vampires, zombies, or the paranormal? Does it portray magic, spells, or curses as harmless fun?’ Of course, not all entertainment that features fantasies or fairy tales is necessarily related to spiritism. When evaluating your entertainment, be determined to make choices that will help you stay far away from anything Jehovah hates. We want to do our best to “maintain a clear conscience” before our God.—Acts 24:16.*

¹³ ***Avoid telling stories about the demons.*** In this regard, we want to imitate the example set by Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:21) Before he came to earth, Jesus lived in heaven, and he knew a lot about Satan and the

* Elders are not authorized to make rules regarding entertainment. Rather, each Christian must use his or her Bible-trained conscience when choosing what to read, watch, or play. Wise family heads ensure that their family’s entertainment is in line with Bible principles.—See the jw.org[®] article “Do Jehovah’s Witnesses Ban Certain Movies, Books, or Songs?” under ABOUT US > FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

12. What questions should we ask ourselves about our entertainment?

13. What do we want to avoid doing?

demons. But he did not relate stories about what those wicked spirits had done. Jesus wanted to be a witness of Jehovah, not a publicity agent for Satan. We can imitate Jesus by not spreading stories about the demons. Instead, we show by our words that our “heart is stirred by something good,” that is, the truth.—Ps. 45:1.

¹⁴ *Do not be terrified of wicked spirits.* In this imperfect world, bad things may happen to us. Accidents, sickness, or even death may come without warning. But we should not think that invisible spirits are responsible. The Bible explains that “time and unexpected events” can overtake anyone. (Eccl. 9:11) As for the demons, Jehovah has shown that he is far more powerful than they are. For example, God did not allow Satan to kill Job. (Job 2:6) In the days of Moses, Jehovah demonstrated his power over the magic-practicing priests of Egypt. (Ex. 8:18; 9:11) Empowered by Jehovah, the glorified Jesus showed his power over Satan and the demons when they were cast down from heaven to the earth. And in the near future, they will be cast into the abyss, where they will not be able to harm anyone.—Rev. 12:9; 20:2, 3.

¹⁵ We see abundant evidence that Jehovah protects

14-15. (a) Why should we not be terrified of wicked spirits?
(b) What evidence is there that Jehovah protects his people today?



**We have nothing to fear from wicked spirits.
Jehovah, Jesus, and the angels are far more powerful
(See paragraphs 14-15)**

his people today. Consider: We are preaching and teaching the truth in all parts of the earth. (Matt. 28: 19, 20) As a result, we expose the evil works of the Devil. Surely, if Satan were able to, he would stop all our activity, but he cannot. So we do not need to be terrified of wicked spirits. We know that “the eyes of Jehovah are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him.” (2 Chron. 16:9) If we are faithful to Jehovah, the demons cannot cause us lasting harm.

BLESSINGS FOR THOSE WHO ACCEPT JEHOVAH'S HELP

¹⁶ It takes courage to resist wicked spirits, especially when well-meaning friends or relatives oppose us. But Jehovah blesses those who show such courage. Consider the example of a sister named Erica, who lives in Ghana. Erica was 21 years old when she accepted a Bible study. As the daughter of a fetish priest, she was expected to comply with a spiritistic custom that involved eating meat offered in ritual sacrifices to her father's gods. When Erica refused, her family considered it an insult to the gods. The family believed that the gods would punish them with mental and physical illnesses.

¹⁷ Erica's family tried to force her to follow the custom, but she would not give in, even though it meant that she had to leave her home. Some Witnesses allowed her to stay with them. In that sense, Jehovah blessed Erica with a new family—fellow believers who became like brothers and sisters to her. (Mark 10:29, 30) Although her relatives disowned her and even burned her belongings, Erica stayed loyal to Jehovah, got baptized, and is now a regular pioneer. She is not terrified of the demons. And regarding her family, Erica says, "I pray daily that my family will experience

16-17. Give an example of the courage it takes to resist wicked spirits.

the blessing of knowing Jehovah and having the freedom that comes from serving our loving God.”

¹⁸ Not all of us will have to face such a dramatic test of our faith. However, all of us need to resist wicked spirits and trust in Jehovah. If we do that, we will receive many blessings and we will avoid being misled by Satan’s lies. Also, we will not be paralyzed by fear of the demons. Above all, we will strengthen our friendship with Jehovah. “Subject yourselves to God,” wrote the disciple James, “but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.”—Jas. 4:7, 8.

18. What blessings do we receive from trusting in Jehovah?

PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 49: A depiction of Jesus as our powerful heavenly King leading an angelic army. Jehovah’s throne is above them.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

■ How do wicked spirits mislead people?

■ How does Jehovah help us resist wicked spirits?

■ What blessings come from resisting wicked spirits?

We Found the “Pearl of High Value”

AS TOLD BY WINSTON AND PAMELA PAYNE



WINSTON and Pamela (Pam) Payne serve in the Australasia branch office. Their happy life together has had its challenges, including adjusting to different cultures and enduring the tragedy of a miscarriage. Yet, through all of this, they have maintained their love for Jehovah and his people as well as their joy in the ministry. In this interview, we invited them to share some of their experiences.

Winston, tell us about your search for God.

I was raised in a nonreligious home on a farm in Queensland, Australia. Because of our isolation, I had little contact with anyone other than my immediate family. From about 12 years of age, I began searching for God. I prayed to him, asking to know the truth about him. I eventually left the farm and found work in Adelaide, South Australia. At age 21, I met Pam while I was on vacation in Sydney, and she told me about the British-Israel religious movement, which claims that British peoples descended from the so-called lost tribes of Israel. Those tribes, the movement says, are the ten tribes of the northern kingdom that went into exile in the eighth century B.C.E. So when I went back to Adelaide, I raised that topic with a workmate who had begun studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. After speaking with him for just a few hours—mainly about the beliefs of the Witnesses—I realized that my childhood prayer was being answered. I was learning the truth about my Creator and his Kingdom! I had found the “pearl of high value.”—Matt. 13:45, 46.

Pam, you too began searching for that pearl at an early age. How did you find it?

I grew up in a religious home in the town of

Coffs Harbour, New South Wales. My parents and grandparents accepted the teachings of the British-Israel movement. My younger brother, older sister, and I, along with many cousins, were raised to believe that God favors people of British ancestry. I remained unconvinced, however, and felt spiritually unsatisfied. When I was 14 years of age, I visited various local churches, including Anglican, Baptist, and Seventh-day Adventist. But my spiritual hunger continued.

My family later moved to Sydney, where I met Winston, who was vacationing there. As he mentioned, our religious discussions eventually led to his studying with the Witnesses. Thereafter, his letters to me were filled with scriptures! I must confess, at first I was worried—even resentful. But gradually I recognized the ring of truth.

In 1962, I moved to Adelaide to be closer to Winston. He had arranged for me to stay with a Witness couple—Thomas and Janice Sloman—who had been missionaries in Papua New Guinea. They showed extraordinary kindness to me; I was just 18 years old, and they were a big help to me spiritually. So I too began to study God’s Word, and soon I became convinced that I had found the truth. After Winston and I got married, we right away embarked on a most re-

warding life of dedicated service—one that, despite trials, has only enhanced our appreciation for the fine pearl we had found.

Winston, tell us about your early life in Jehovah's service.

Not long after Pam and I got married, Jehovah began to open up to us the first of many 'large doors' to increased activity. (1 Cor. 16:9) The first door was pointed out to us by Brother Jack Porter, who served our small congregation as circuit overseer. (He is now a fellow Australasia Branch Committee member.) Jack and his wife, Roslyn, encouraged us to regular pioneer—a privilege we enjoyed for five years. When I was 29 years of age, Pam and I were asked to serve in the circuit work in the South Pacific Islands, which then came under the Fiji branch. The islands were American Samoa, Samoa, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

In those days, people on some of the more isolated islands were suspicious of Jehovah's Witnesses, so we had to be cautious and discreet. (Matt. 10:16) The congregations were small, and some could not provide us with accommodations. So we looked for a place to stay with local people in the villages, and they were always very kind to us.

You have a keen interest in the translation work, Winston. How was that interest kindled?

At the time, the brothers on the island state of Tonga had only a few tracts and booklets in Tongan—a Polynesian language. In the ministry, they used the English edition of the study aid *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. So during a four-week elders' school, three local elders whose English was somewhat limited agreed to translate the *Truth* book into Tongan. Pam typed up the manuscript, and we sent it to the United States branch for printing. The whole project took about eight weeks. Even though the quality of the translation left much to be desired, the publication helped many Tongan-speaking people learn the truth. Pam and I are not translators, but that experience kindled our interest in this work.

Pam, how did life in the islands compare with life in Australia?

It was very different! Depending on where we were, we had to deal with swarms of mosquitoes, intense heat and humidity, rats, sickness and, at times, little food. On the other hand, at the end of each day, it was a restful experience to look out at the ocean from our *fale*—the Samoan name for a typical Polynesian house with a thatched roof and no walls. On

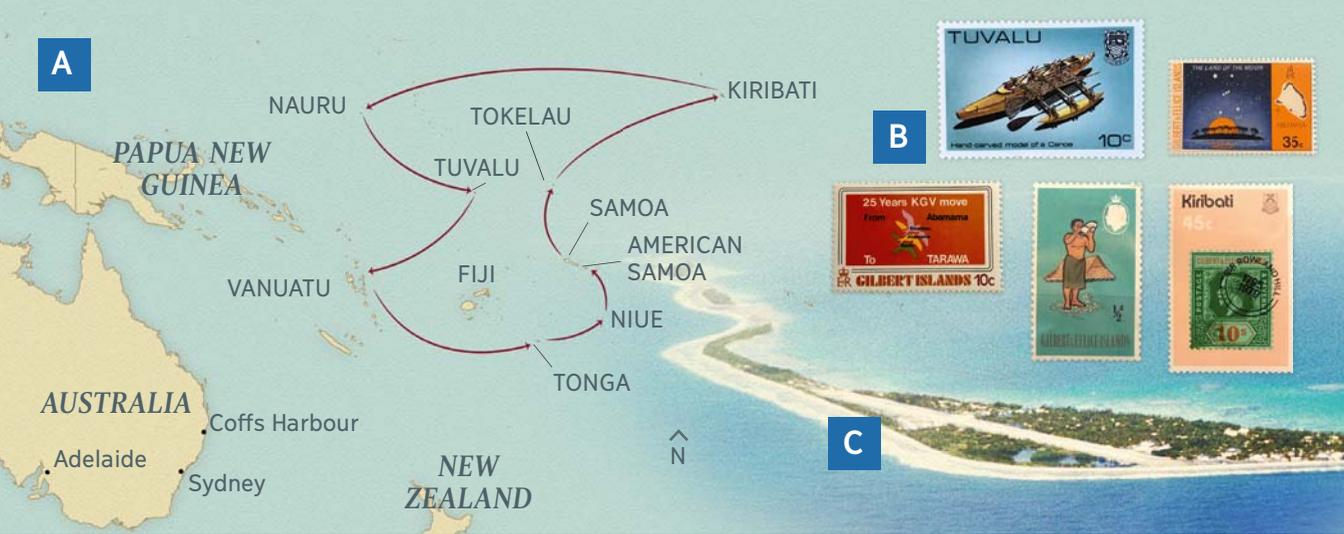
moonlit nights, coconut palms would stand out in silhouette and the moon would reflect off the ocean. Such precious moments moved us to meditate and pray, taking our thoughts from the negatives to the positives.

We came to love the children, who were lots of fun and very curious when they saw us white foreigners. While we were visiting Niue, one little boy rubbed one of Winston's hairy arms and said, "I like your feathers." Evidently, he had never seen such hairy arms before and did not quite know how to describe them!

It pained our hearts to see the poor conditions under which many of the people lived. They had beautiful surroundings but inadequate health care and little drinking water. Yet, our brothers did not seem worried. That was normal living for them. They were happy with having their family around them, with having a place to meet for worship, and with having the privilege of praising Jehovah. Their example helped us to keep our priorities straight and our life simple.

At times, Pam, you had to get your own water and prepare your food in totally new circumstances. How did you manage?

I have my father to thank. He taught me many useful things, such as how to make an open fire and



- A. A map of our travels in the circuit work
 - B. Postage stamps from some of the islands. Kiribati and Tuvalu were formerly known as the Gilbert and Ellice Islands
 - C. The beautiful coral island of Funafuti in the nation of Tuvalu. One of the many islands we visited before missionaries were assigned there
 - D. One of our accommodations while in circuit work
 - E. On Niue Island, taking a group out in service
 - F. In Tonga, Pam washing our clothes
 - G. In Samoa, conducting an elders' school
-

cook on it and how to make do with little in a material way. On one visit to Kiribati, we stayed in a small house with a thatched roof, a coral floor, and bamboo walls. To cook a simple meal, I dug a hole in the floor to make a fireplace and dropped in coconut husks for fuel. For water, I lined up at a well with the local women. In order to haul the water up, they used a stick about six feet long with a thin rope attached to the end, somewhat like a fishing rod. But instead of tying a hook to the other end of the rope, they attached a can. Taking turns, each woman cast her line and then flicked her wrist at just the right moment. The can flipped on its side and filled up. I thought it was simple—until it was my turn. I cast my line

several times, but the can would hit the water and just float! After everyone stopped laughing, one of the women offered to help me. They were always most helpful and kind.

You both came to love your assignment on the islands. Would you share some special memories with us?

Winston: It took us a little while to catch on to certain customs. For example, when the brothers provided a meal, they usually gave us all the food they had on hand. At first, we were unaware that we were supposed to leave something for them. So we ate everything that was put before us! Of course, when we found out what the situation really was, we left food for them. Despite our blunders, the brothers were understanding. And they were thrilled to see us every six months or so when we visited them in the circuit work. Besides the local brothers, we were the only other Witnesses they ever saw back then.

Our visits also gave a good witness in the communities. Many villagers thought that the brothers' religion was something that they had dreamed up. So when a minister and his wife from overseas visited the brothers, the locals were not only enlightened but also impressed.

Pam: One of my most cherished memories takes me back to Kiribati, where there was a congregation of just a few brothers and sisters. The only elder, Itinikai Matera, did his best to look after us. He showed up one day with a basket that contained a single egg. “For you,” he said. A chicken’s egg was a rare treat for us back then. That small but generous act touched our hearts.

Some years later, Pam, you lost a child through a miscarriage. What helped you to cope?

I became pregnant in 1973 while Winston and I were in the South Pacific. We decided to return to Australia, where four months later we lost our baby. Winston was also deeply affected; it was his baby too. The pain in my heart diminished over time, but it never fully went away until we received the April 15, 2009, issue of *The Watchtower*. The “Questions From Readers” asked: “Is there any hope of a resurrection for a baby that dies in its mother’s womb?” The article reassured us that the matter rests with Jehovah, who always does what is right. He will provide healing for the many wounds inflicted on us by life in this wicked world as he lovingly directs his Son to ‘break up Satan’s works.’ (1 John 3:8) The article also



Winston and Pam at the Australasia branch

helped us to appreciate even more what a precious “pearl” we have as Jehovah’s people! Where would we be without the Kingdom hope?

After the loss of our baby, we again took up full-time service. We served for some months at the Australia Bethel and eventually resumed circuit work. In 1981, after serving for four years in rural New South Wales and Sydney, we were invited to the Australia branch, as it was then called, and have been there ever since.

Winston, did your experience in the South Pacific Islands help you in your work as a member of the Australasia Branch Committee?

Yes, in a number of ways. First, Australia was asked to care for American Samoa and Samoa. Then, the New Zealand branch was merged with Australia. Now, the Australasia branch territory includes Australia, American Samoa and Samoa, the Cook Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, and Tonga—many of which I have been privileged to visit as a branch representative. My experience of working along with those faithful brothers and sisters in the islands has been of great help to me as I now serve them from the branch office.

May I say in conclusion that Pam and I have long been aware that, as in our personal experience, it is not just adults who search for God. Young people too want that “pearl of high value”—even if other family members show no interest. (2 Ki. 5:2, 3; 2 Chron. 34:1-3) To be sure, Jehovah is a loving God who wants all, both young and old, to gain life!

When Pam and I began our search for God more than 50 years ago, little did we know what that quest would lead to. Kingdom truth is without a doubt a pearl of inestimable value! We are determined to hold on to that precious pearl with all our might!

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COVER PICTURE:

After his resurrection, Jesus met with his disciples and instructed them to "go, . . . and make disciples" (See study article 14, paragraph 1)

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