

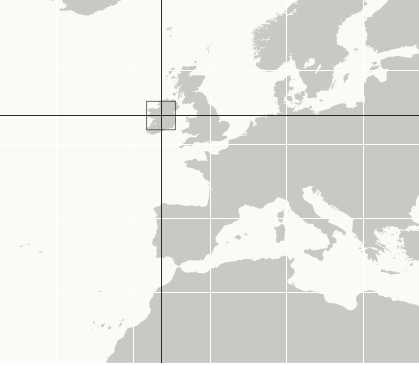
SEPTEMBER 2018

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
OCTOBER 29–DECEMBER 2, 2018



COVER IMAGE:
IRELAND

Brothers make day trips to the Aran Islands, off the west coast of Ireland, to share the good news with the islanders in the Irish language

PUBLISHERS

6,747

BIBLE STUDIES

3,392

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE (2017)

12,082

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In a world where people are becoming increasingly self-centered, the Christian congregation stands out as a beacon of love. One aspect of that love is consideration for others, the topic of these two articles. First, we will see how Jehovah sets a wonderful example of being considerate of others. Then we will review some practical ways in which we can imitate him.

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“If You Know These Things, Happy You Are if You Do Them”

“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”—JOHN 4:34.

WHY is it a challenge to apply what we learn from God’s Word? One reason is that it takes humility to do what is right, and our ability to remain humble is under assault. In these “last days,” we are surrounded by people who are “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, haughty,” and “without self-control.” (2 Tim. 3:1-3) When selfish behavior is reported and even celebrated, a servant of God might despise such conduct but envy the results. (Ps. 37:1; 73:3) One might even wonder: ‘Is there any point in my putting others’ interests ahead of my own? If I conduct myself “as a lesser one,” might people lose respect for me?’ (Luke 9:48) Allowing the world’s selfish spirit to influence us could harm the loving relationships we enjoy in the congregation and our identity as Christians. But we are rewarded when we study the good examples set out in the Bible and imitate them.

² If we want to make faithful ones our role models, we need

1. What effect could the world’s selfish spirit have on our humility?
2. What effect can faithful servants of God have on us?

SONGS: 80, 35

HOW MIGHT YOU IMITATE . . .

the humility of Paul and Barnabas?

the unselfish spirit of Epaphras?

King David’s self-restraint when provoked by Shimei?

to investigate what they did that brought the desired results. How did they achieve friendship with God, enjoy his approval, and acquire power to accomplish his will? This kind of study is an essential part of our spiritual feeding.

SPIRITUAL FOOD—MORE THAN JUST INFORMATION

³ We receive much good counsel and training through the Bible, our Christian publications, our websites, JW Broadcasting, and our meetings and assemblies. But according to Jesus' words found at John 4:34, spiritual food involves more than just taking in knowledge. What more is involved? Jesus said: "My food is to *do the will* of him who sent me and to finish his *work*."

⁴ To Jesus, spiritual food included acting on God's direction. In what sense is this like food? Just as our bodies are contented and nourished when we eat a good meal, our hearts are strengthened and our faith is nourished for everlasting life when we participate in doing God's will. How many times have you gone to a meeting for field service not feeling your best—only to finish preaching that day refreshed and invigorated?

⁵ Putting divine instruction into practice is essentially what wisdom means. (Ps. 107:43) The reward for wisdom is worth the effort. "Nothing you desire can compare to it. . . . It is a tree of life to those who take hold of it, and those who keep firm hold of it will be called

3, 4. (a) How do we receive spiritual instruction? (b) Why can we say that spiritual food involves more than taking in knowledge?

5. What is the reward for acting wisely?

happy." (Prov. 3:13-18) Jesus said: "If you know these things, happy you are if you do them." (John 13:17) The disciples' happiness would last if they kept doing what Jesus instructed them to do. They did not embrace his teachings and example simply as an immediate response on that one occasion. It became their way of life.

⁶ Endurance in applying what we know to be true is just as important today. To illustrate, a mechanic may have tools, materials, and knowledge. But he will not benefit from those assets unless he uses them. If he has done mechanical work in the past and has gained valuable experience in the process, he must continue to practice what he has learned in order to stay skillful and productive. Likewise, we might enjoy initial success because we apply what we read in the Bible. However, we will find lasting happiness by living humbly by Jehovah's instruction each day.

⁷ Let us consider some different situations in which our humility might be put to the test and see how similar challenges were met by faithful ones of old. Spiritual strength comes from more than just considering the information. So think of how you personally can apply each of these points, and then do it without delay.

VIEW THEM AS EQUALS

⁸ God's will is that "all sorts of people should be saved and come to an accu-

6. Why must we endure in showing wisdom?

7. In developing wisdom, what should be our response to Bible examples?

8, 9. What do the events recorded at Acts 14:8-15 reveal about the apostle Paul's humility? (See opening picture.)

rate knowledge of truth.” (1 Tim. 2:4) What is your view of the many sorts of people who have yet to learn the truth? Although the apostle Paul searched in synagogues for those who already knew something about God, he certainly did not restrict his efforts to Jewish people. The responses he received from those who worshipped other deities would test the depth of his humility.

⁹ On Paul’s first missionary journey, for instance, the Lycaonian people mistook him and Barnabas for superheroes—as incarnations of their false gods Zeus and Hermes. Were Paul and Barnabas tempted to ride the wave of popularity? Would that seem to be a refreshing break from all the persecution they had experienced in the last two cities they visited? Did they imagine that the publicity could help to advance the good news? Not at all! They immediately protested by ripping their garments and leaping into the crowd, crying out: “Why are you doing these things? We too are humans having the same infirmities as you have.”—Acts 14:8-15.

¹⁰ In acknowledging that they too were imperfect, Paul and Barnabas were not saying that their way of worship was basically the same as that of those pagans. Were the two of them not missionaries with a special appointment? (Acts 13:2) Had they not been anointed with holy spirit and clothed with a glorious hope? Yes, but Paul and Barnabas understood that the Lycaonian people could receive the same advantages if they responded favorably to the good news.

10. In what sense could Paul and Barnabas consider themselves the equals of the Lycaonian people?

¹¹ How might we imitate Paul’s exemplary humility? First, we must resist any temptation to expect or accept adulation for what we accomplish in Jehovah’s strength. Each of us does well to ask himself: ‘How do I view the people to whom I preach? Might I unwittingly harbor toward certain people a bias that is common in my community?’ Commendably, Jehovah’s Witnesses around the world have been analyzing their territories to determine whether there are yet more who might respond to the good news. At times, this may require learning the languages and customs of those whom society in general has marginalized. In no way should Witnesses who reach out to such ones view themselves as superior. Rather, they seek to understand each individual in order to reach his heart with the Kingdom message.

PRAY FOR OTHERS BY NAME

¹² Another way to show that we are humbly heeding divine direction is by praying for those who have already “acquired a faith as precious as ours.” (2 Pet. 1:1) Epaphras did so. The Bible mentions him only three times—all in the inspired writings of Paul. While under house arrest in Rome, Paul wrote to Christians living in Colossae that Epaphras was “always exerting himself in [their] behalf in his prayers.” (Col. 4:12) Epaphras knew the brothers well, and he cared for them deeply. His situation as Paul’s “fellow captive” did

11. When preaching, how can we imitate Paul’s exemplary humility?

12. How did Epaphras show unselfish concern for others?

not blind him to the spiritual needs of others. (Philem. 23) And he did something about it. Is that not a mark of unselfish concern? Praying for our fellow servants of Jehovah has real force, especially when we remember them individually, such as by name.—2 Cor. 1:11; Jas. 5:16.

¹³ Think of those whom you can pray for by name. Like Epaphras, many of our brothers and sisters are praying for those in their congregation and for families who are carrying a heavy load of responsibility or who are facing serious decisions or temptations. Many pray for those whose names are listed in the jw.org article “Jehovah’s Witnesses Imprisoned for Their Faith.” (Look under NEWSROOM > LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS.) In addition, we do well to remember those who have lost loved ones in death, those who have survived recent disasters and wars, and those who are enduring economic crises. Clearly, there are many brothers and sisters who need our prayers and who can benefit from them. When we pray for such ones, we show that we are looking out not only for our own interests but for those of others. (Phil. 2:4) Jehovah hears such prayers.

“BE QUICK TO LISTEN”

¹⁴ Another area that reveals the depth of our humility is our willingness to hear people out. James 1:19 says that we should “be quick to listen.” Jehovah himself sets the superlative example in this regard. (Gen. 18:32; Josh. 10:14)

13. How might you imitate the example of Epaphras in your prayers?

14. How does Jehovah set the best example as a listener?

Consider what we can learn from the interchange recorded at **Exodus 32:11-14**. **(Read.)** Although not needing Moses’ input, Jehovah gave Moses an opportunity to reveal how he felt. What human would listen at length to the reasoning of someone who has displayed faulty thinking and then act on that person’s word? Yet, Jehovah listens patiently to humans who call on him in faith.

¹⁵ Each of us does well to ask: ‘If Jehovah can stoop down to deal with people and listen to them as he did with Abraham, Rachel, Moses, Joshua, Manoah, Elijah, and Hezekiah, should I not be better at honoring all my brothers, dignifying them, listening to their ideas, and even acting on their good ideas? Does someone in my congregation or in my family deserve my attention right now? What should I do about that? What will I do about that?’—Gen. 30:6; Judg. 13:9; 1 Ki. 17:22; 2 Chron. 30:20.

“PERHAPS JEHOVAH WILL SEE MY AFFLICTION”

¹⁶ Humility also helps us to show self-control when we are provoked. (Eph. 4:2) A remarkable example of this can be found at **2 Samuel 16:5-13**. **(Read.)** David and his servants endured reproach and physical assault by Shimei, a relative of King Saul’s. David did so despite having the power to put an end to it. How did David muster up the strength to control his spirit? We gain insight into this by examining the third Psalm.

15. How might we imitate Jehovah in honoring others?

16. How did King David react when provoked by Shimei?



David said: "Leave him alone!" What would you have done?
(See paragraphs 16, 17)

¹⁷ The superscription of Psalm 3 indicates that it was composed when David "was fleeing from his son Absalom." Verses 1 and 2 fit events described in chapter 16 of Second Samuel. Then Psalm 3:4 highlights David's confidence: "I will call aloud to Jehovah, and he will answer me from his holy mountain." We too can pray when under attack. In response, Jehovah provides his holy spirit, which can help us to endure. Can you think of a situation in which you need to exercise self-restraint or freely forgive unwarranted animosity? Are you confident that Jehovah can see your affliction and bestow a blessing?

"WISDOM IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING"

¹⁸ Doing what we know to be right brings rich blessings. No wonder Prov-

17. What enabled David to control his spirit, and how might we imitate him?

18. How will we benefit if we keep applying divine instruction?

verbs 4:7 says that "wisdom is the most important thing"! Although wisdom is based on knowledge, it particularly has to do with the decisions we make rather than just the facts we understand. Even ants reveal wisdom. Ants demonstrate instinctive wisdom by preparing their food in the summer. (Prov. 30:24, 25) Christ, "the wisdom of God," always does the things pleasing to the Father. (1 Cor. 1:24; John 8:29) God knows the difference between making the right choice and acting on that choice. And he rewards those who demonstrate humility with endurance and who practice what they know to be true. **(Read Matthew 7:21-23.)** Therefore, work to preserve the spiritual environment in which genuine humility can flourish. Applying what we know to be true takes time and requires patience, but it is a mark of humility that leads to happiness now and forever.

OLDER CHRISTIANS

Jehovah Treasures Your Loyalty

AROUND the globe, elders cherish the privileges of service they have among God's people. What a blessing they are to all of us! Not too long ago, however, an adjustment was made. Older elders were asked to hand over some of their weightier responsibilities to younger elders. In what way?

The new arrangement is that circuit overseers and field instructors discontinue those particular types of service when they reach 70 years of age. Also, elders who are 80 years old will turn over to younger elders

various other assignments, such as being coordinator of a Branch Committee or being coordinator of the body of elders in a local congregation. How have these dear older elders responded to this adjustment? They have shown loyalty to Jehovah and to his organization!

"I was totally in agreement with the decision," comments Ken, who served as coordinator of a Branch Committee for almost 49 years. "In fact, on the very morning I found out, I had prayed to Jehovah, expressing the

What are some ways in which older Christians are helping?

Reaching out to unbelieving mates



Helping the inactive and conducting Bible studies



need for a younger brother to serve as the coordinator.” Ken’s reaction is typical of the sentiments expressed by faithful older ones worldwide. Of course, since they loved serving their brothers, there was some initial disappointment.

“It saddened me a little,” says Esperandio, who had been the coordinator of the body of elders in his congregation. But he acknowledges, “I needed more time to care for my failing health.” As we might expect, Esperandio continues to serve Jehovah faithfully and to be a blessing to his congregation.

What about longtime traveling overseers who have made the transition to other forms of service? Allan, who served as a traveling overseer for 38 years, admits, “When I found out, I felt numb.” Still, he recognized the benefits of training younger

men for the work, and he continues to serve faithfully.

Russell, who served as a traveling overseer and a field instructor for a total of 40 years, says that initially he and his wife were disappointed. “We appreciated our privilege very much and felt that we had the stamina to continue.” Russell and his wife are using their training and experience in the local congregation, to the joy of the publishers who serve with them.

Even if you have not personally experienced feelings like those mentioned earlier, an account in 2 Samuel may help you to understand those who have.

A MAN MODEST AND REALISTIC

Think back to when King David’s son Absalom revolted. David fled from Jerusalem to Mahanaim, east of the Jordan River. There David and those with him were in need of some of life’s essentials. Do you remember what happened?

Three men in the area generously brought beds, various food items, and needed utensils. Barzillai was one of these men. (2 Sam. 17:27-29) Once Absalom’s rebellion was thwarted, David could return to Jerusalem, and Barzillai escorted him to the Jordan. David urged him to come to Jerusalem. The king offered, in turn, to supply him with food, even though Barzillai was “a very wealthy man” and would not need the food that was offered. (2 Sam. 19:31-33) But David likely appreciated Barzillai’s qualities and any suggestions that he might have to offer. It certainly would have been a fine privilege to live and work in the royal court!

Being realistic and modest, Barzillai pointed out that he was 80 years old. Then he added: “Can I discern between good and bad?” What did he mean? Barzillai must have gained wisdom during his long life. And

Expanding their ministry



he could still offer good advice, just as “older men” later did to King Rehoboam. (1 Ki. 12:6, 7; Ps. 92:12-14; Prov. 16:31) So Barzillai’s comment about discerning good and bad may have referred to the physical effects or limits that age had brought on him. He admitted that old age had already affected his sense of taste and his hearing. (Eccl. 12: 4, 5) Thus Barzillai on his own urged David to take to Jerusalem the younger man Chimham, presumably Barzillai’s son.—2 Sam. 19: 35-40.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The age-related adjustment mentioned at the outset reflects a view similar to what Barzillai showed. Understandably, in our time, what had to be considered was more than just one person’s circumstances and abilities, as was the case with Barzillai. There was a need to consider realistically what was best for faithful elders serving earth wide.

These modest older Christian men could readily see that Jehovah’s organization will be strengthened for future growth if the responsibilities that they had long cared for could be handled by younger brothers. In most cases, the older brothers were the ones who trained the younger ones, as Barzillai likely trained his son and the apostle Paul did Timothy. (1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:20-22) These younger brothers have proved that they are now “gifts in men,” able to help “build up the body of the Christ.”—Eph. 4:8-12; compare Numbers 11:16, 17, 29.

DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE A SHARE

Many in the worldwide congregation of God’s people who have relinquished certain responsibilities are able to take advantage of new or expanded opportunities in Jehovah’s work.

“My new circumstances allow me to reach out to the unbelieving husbands of sisters in our local congregation,” says Marco, who was a traveling overseer for 19 years.

“Our new goals include helping the inactive and conducting more Bible studies,” says Geraldo, who was in the traveling work for 28 years. He reports that he and his wife thus far are conducting 15 Bible studies and that a good number of inactive ones are now attending meetings.

Allan, quoted earlier, remarks: “We now have the opportunity to apply ourselves fully to the preaching work. We are enjoying public witnessing, business territory, and witnessing to our neighbors, two of whom have come to the Kingdom Hall.”

If you are a capable and loyal brother and you have received a new assignment among God’s people, there is another special way that you can contribute. You can support Jehovah’s work by sharing your invaluable experience with younger men in the congregation. “Jehovah is training and using beautiful, talented younger ones,” says Russell, quoted earlier. “The brotherhood is benefiting from their energetic teaching and shepherding!”—See the box “Help Younger Men Reach Their Full Potential.”

JEHOVAH TREASURES YOUR LOYALTY

If you have recently entered a different form of service, remain positive. You have already touched the lives of countless people with your heartfelt work, and you can continue to do so. You have been loved and certainly continue to be loved.

More important, you have made a permanent impression on Jehovah’s heart. He will not “forget your work and the love you showed for his name by ministering and *continuing* to minister to the holy ones.” (Heb. 6: 10) That inspired verse assures all that his



Help Younger Men Reach Their Full Potential

Encourage them

to set specific spiritual goals, and help them to reach their goals.

Commend them

because approval, especially from a mature Christian, strengthens these young men and builds their confidence.

Train them

to rely primarily on God's Word and on direction given through Jehovah's congregation.

promise extends beyond our past labors. You are far too precious to Jehovah to be forgotten by him for your past *and continuing* efforts to please him!

What if you personally are not one who has had a change of assignment as discussed above? This matter may still have a direct bearing on you. In what way?

If you are now in contact with a faithful older brother who received a change in as-

signment, you can benefit from his maturity and years of experience. Seek his advice. Ask for his suggestions. And observe how in his current assignment, he loyally applies his experience.

Whether you are an older one serving in a new way or a brother or a sister in a position to benefit, bear in mind that Jehovah treasures the loyalty of those who have long served him and who continue to do so.



Keep Displaying Love —It Builds Up

“Love builds up.”—1 COR. 8:1.

SONGS: 109, 121

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why do we need to build up
our brothers and sisters?

How do Jehovah and Jesus
build us up in love?

What can we do to strength-
en others?

ON HIS final night with his disciples, Jesus mentioned love nearly 30 times. He specifically indicated that his disciples should “love one another.” (John 15:12, 17) Their love for one another would be so outstanding that it would clearly distinguish them as his true followers. (John 13:34, 35) This love is not mere sentimentality. Jesus was referring to a most noble quality—self-sacrificing love. He said: “No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his life in behalf of his friends. You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you.”—John 15:13, 14.

² The genuine, self-sacrificing love and unbreakable unity of Jehovah’s servants today identify them as God’s people. (1 John 3:10, 11) How grateful we are that Christlike love prevails among Jehovah’s servants regardless of their nationality, tribe, language, or background! We may wonder, though: ‘Why is love especially vital in our day? How do

-
1. What important subject did Jesus discuss on his final night with his disciples?
 2. (a) What do we find among God’s servants? (b) What questions will we answer in this article?

Jehovah and Jesus build us up in love? How can we individually display Christlike love that “builds up”?’ —1 Cor. 8:1.

WHY LOVE IS ESPECIALLY VITAL NOW

³ Because life is “filled with trouble and sorrow,” many in these “critical times” suffer from various degrees of emotional distress. (Ps. 90:10; 2 Tim. 3:1-5) Countless individuals feel like just giving up. Estimates suggest that more than 800,000 people die every year from suicide—about one death every 40 seconds. Sad to say, even some Christians have succumbed to such pressures and have taken their own life.

⁴ Back in Bible times, some of God’s faithful servants were so overwhelmed by their circumstances that they felt that they wanted to die. For example, pain-ridden Job lamented: “I loathe my life; I do not want to go on living.” (Job 7:16; 14:13) Jonah was so disappointed with the way things had turned out in his assignment that he said: “Now, O Jehovah, please take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.” (Jonah 4:3) Also, at one point the faithful prophet Elijah felt so affected by his situation that he asked that he might die. He said: “It is enough! Now, O Jehovah, take my life away.” (1 Ki. 19:4) However, Jehovah valued those devoted servants and wanted them to live. Instead of condemning how they felt, he helped them to overcome their desire to die and built them up in love so that they could continue serving him faithfully.

3. How do these “critical times” affect people?
4. Which Bible characters expressed a desire to die?

⁵ Even if our brothers and sisters do not necessarily feel like giving up, many today deal with stressful situations and need to be built up in love. Some endure persecution and ridicule. Others are the victims of criticism or backbiting at their workplace. Or they are exhausted because of working overtime or having to meet relentless deadlines. Still others deal with strength-sapping domestic problems, perhaps being the target of criticism by an unbelieving mate. As a result of these and other pressures, many in the congregation feel physically and emotionally drained. Who can help discouraged ones to keep going?

BE BUILT UP BY JEHOVAH’S LOVE

⁶ Jehovah builds up his worshippers by reassuring them of his unfailing love. How encouraging it must have been for faithful Israelites to hear Jehovah’s words: “You became precious in my eyes, you were honored, and I have loved you. . . . Do not be afraid, for I am with you!” (Isa. 43:4, 5) As one of Jehovah’s servants, you can be sure that Jehovah loves you most tenderly.* God’s Word promises concerning those pursuing pure worship: “As a mighty One, he will save. He will exult over you with great joy.”—Zeph. 3:16, 17.

⁷ No matter what trials his people may face, Jehovah promises to sustain and comfort them. “You will nurse and be

* See chapter 24 of the book *Draw Close to Jehovah*.

5. Why do brothers and sisters need our love especially now?
6. How does Jehovah build up his servants in love?
7. In what way is Jehovah’s love like that of a nursing mother? (See opening picture.)

carried on the hip, and you will be bounced on the knees. As a mother comforts her son, so I will keep comforting you.” (Isa. 66:12, 13) What a heartwarming scene—a loving mother carrying a baby on her hip or bouncing him on her knees! In this way Jehovah touchingly illustrates the intensity and tenderness of his love for true worshippers. Never doubt that you are personally very precious and dear to Jehovah. —Jer. 31:3.

⁸ True Christians also have this reason to be drawn to God’s love: He “loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) What love Jesus also showed in giving his life for us! And what a powerful motivation that love is for us! God’s Word promises that not even “tribulation or distress” can “separate us from the love of the Christ.” —Rom. 8:35, 38, 39.

⁹ When we grapple with trials that

8, 9. How can Jesus’ love fortify us?

are physically, emotionally, or spiritually draining, the compelling force of Christ’s love can give us the strength to endure. **(Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.)** Jesus’ love has the power to sustain us and to motivate us not to give up, even in the face of such trials as disasters, persecution, personal disappointments, or gnawing anxiety.

OUR BROTHERS NEED OUR LOVE

¹⁰ One means by which Jehovah builds us up in love is the Christian congregation. Individually, we can reciprocate his love by loving and building up our spiritual brothers and sisters not only spiritually but also emotionally. (1 John 4:19-21) The apostle Paul urged Christians: “Keep encouraging one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing.” (1 Thess. 5:11) Yes, all in the congregation—not just elders—can imitate Jehovah and Jesus in comforting and building up the brothers and sisters.—**Read Romans 15:1, 2.**

¹¹ Some in the congregation who have

10, 11. Who have the responsibility to build up discouraged brothers? Explain.

Studying Jesus’ example can motivate you
(See paragraphs 10, 11)



emotional disorders may need professional help and medication. (Luke 5:31) Elders and others in the congregation modestly recognize that they are not trained mental-health-care professionals. However, they and others in the congregation have a vital role to play—to “speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all.” (1 Thess. 5:14) All Christians need to display loving empathy and patience, speaking consolingly in order to build up discouraged ones. Are you a source of comfort and encouragement? Knowing how to provide such help can render your efforts more effective.

¹² How can our love build up those who experience painful emotions? “At times I have suicidal thoughts,” says one Christian sister in Europe. “But I have a good support system. The congregation I belong to has saved my life. The brothers and sisters are always very encouraging and loving. Although only a few know that I suffer from depression, the congregation is always there for me. One married couple are like my spiritual parents. They take good care of me, and they are there for me literally 24 hours a day.” True, not everyone can assist to the same degree. But our genuine expressions of support can make a big difference to those who are suffering from emotional pain.*

* For practical suggestions on dealing with suicidal thoughts and feelings, see articles in *Awake!*: “Why Go On? Three Reasons to Keep Living” (April 2014); “When You Feel Like Giving Up on Life” (January 2012); and “Life Is Worth Living” (October 22, 2001).

12. Give an example of someone who was built up by a congregation’s love.

HOW TO BUILD UP OTHERS IN LOVE

¹³ *Be a good listener.* (Jas. 1:19) To listen with empathy is an act of love. You may ask tactful and sympathetic questions with the aim of understanding the feelings of a sufferer. You will then be able to show empathy and to build up your fellow servant. Let your facial expressions reflect your sincere, loving concern. If the other Christian feels the need to explain things in greater detail, be patient and resist any urge to interrupt. By listening patiently, you will more likely understand the feelings involved. That can help your suffering brother or sister to have confidence in you and thus be more inclined to listen to what you say as you strive to be upbuilding. When you show that you truly care, your loving concern can be very comforting.

¹⁴ *Avoid a critical spirit.* Our coming across as being critical of depressed ones can add to their anguish and can undermine our sincere efforts to build them up in love. “Thoughtless speech is like the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is a healing.” (Prov. 12:18) Naturally, we do not intentionally ‘stab’ depressed individuals with hurtful words. Yet, even if someone is ‘stabbed’ unintentionally, the effect can be very painful. To build others up in love by encouraging them requires that we exercise empathy, putting ourselves in their situation to the extent possible.—Matt. 7:12.

¹⁵ *Console others with God’s Word.*

13. What is essential if we want to build up others?

14. Why do we want to avoid a critical spirit?

15. What is a valuable tool we can use to build others up in love?

(Read Romans 15:4, 5.) The Holy Scriptures are a treasure trove of comfort and consolation. The Bible is from “the God who supplies endurance and comfort.” Besides comforting scriptures, we have a wealth of Bible study aids. We can use the *Watch Tower Publications Index* and the *Research Guide for Jehovah’s Witnesses*. These can help us locate upbuilding Scriptural thoughts to cope with all kinds of problems. These aids can thus equip us to be in a position to provide empathetic thoughts that can make our loving efforts more effective.

¹⁶ *Be tender and gentle.* These are priceless facets of the unselfish love we show when we encourage and build up someone. Jehovah himself is “the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort,” and he has “tender compassion” for his servants. **(Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-6; Luke 1:78; Rom. 15:13)** Paul set a fine example in this regard, writing: “We became gentle in your midst, as when a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. So having tender affection for you, we were determined to impart to you, not only the good news of God but also our very selves, because you became so beloved to us.” (1 Thess. 2:7, 8) When we display godlike tenderness, we can be the answer to a distressed person’s prayers.

¹⁷ *Do not expect perfection from your brothers.* Keep a balanced view of your spiritual brothers and sisters. To expect faultless behavior from your brothers is unrealistic and will bring disappoint-

16. What qualities do we need when encouraging a depressed Christian?

17. What balanced view of our brothers will help us build them up in love?

ment. (Eccl. 7:21, 22) Remember, Jehovah is realistic in what he requires of his servants. If we imitate his example, we will be prepared to put up with the imperfections of others. (Eph. 4:2, 32) Instead of giving them the impression that they are not doing enough, make it a point to commend them for what they are doing. That can encourage them. Sincere commendation can build others up in love and help them to find “cause for rejoicing” in their own sacred service. How much better when we do so rather than express frustrating comparisons with others.—Gal. 6:4.

¹⁸ Every one of Jehovah’s sheep is extremely precious to him and to Jesus, who provided the ransom sacrifice. (Gal. 2:20) We love our spiritual brothers and sisters dearly. And we want to care for them in a tender and loving way. In order to be a source of refreshment, “let us pursue the things making for peace and the things that build one another up.” (Rom. 14:19) How we all look forward to the time when, in the coming Paradise, we will never have reason to be discouraged! There will be no more sickness, wars, inherited death, persecution, domestic strife, and disappointments. When the Millennium is past, mankind will have reached perfection. Those who pass the final test will then be adopted as earthly sons of Jehovah God and have “the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Rom. 8:21) May we all keep displaying the love that builds up and helping one another to attain that joyful and rewarding goal.

18. What incentive do we have to build others up in love?



Happy Are Those Who Serve “the Happy God”

“Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!”—PS. 144:15.

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES certainly are a happy people. Their meetings, assemblies, and social gatherings are characterized by the pleasant sound of joyful conversations and laughter. Why are they so happy? The main reason is that they know, serve, and strive to imitate Jehovah, “the happy God.” (1 Tim. 1:11; Ps. 16:11) Being the Source of happiness, God wants us to be happy, and he gives us many reasons to rejoice.—Deut. 12:7; Eccl. 3:12, 13.

² What about you personally? Are you happy? Can you increase your happiness? Happiness may be defined as “a state of well-being that is characterized by relative permanence, by emotion ranging from mere contentment to deep and intense joy in living, and by a natural desire for it to continue.” The Bible shows that true happiness refers to the condition of one who is blessed by Jehovah. In today’s world, though, being happy may be a challenge. Why?

1. Why are Jehovah’s worshippers a happy people? (See opening picture.)
- 2, 3. (a) What is happiness? (b) Why might it be a challenge to be happy?

SONGS: 44, 125

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What is fundamental to true happiness?

What qualities help us to be happy?

How can we be happy though enduring difficulties?

³ Stressful events—such as when a loved one dies or is disfellowshipped or when faced with a divorce or the loss of a job—can rob us of happiness. Domestic strife and a breakdown in peaceful communication can erode our sense of well-being. Ridicule by workmates or classmates, religious persecution, or imprisonment can undermine our happiness. So can deteriorating health, chronic illness, or depression. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ, “the happy and only Potentate,” delighted in bringing comfort and happiness to people. (1 Tim. 6:15; Matt. 11:28-30) In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus identified a number of qualities that can contribute to our happiness despite distressing trials in Satan’s world.

STRONG SPIRITUALITY —FUNDAMENTAL TO HAPPINESS

⁴ The first thing that Jesus focused on is especially important: “*Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.*” (Matt. 5:3) How do we show that we are conscious of that need? We do so by taking in spiritual food, cherishing spiritual values, and giving priority to worshipping the happy God. If we take those steps, our happiness will grow. We will strengthen our faith in the coming fulfillment of God’s promises. And we will be encouraged by “the happy hope” that God’s Word provides for true worshippers.—Titus 2:13.

⁵ Building a strong relationship with Jehovah is a vital part of finding lasting happiness. The apostle Paul was inspired to write: “Always rejoice in

the Lord [Jehovah]. Again I will say, Rejoice!” (Phil. 4:4) To enjoy such a precious relationship, we need to acquire divine wisdom. God’s Word states: “Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who acquires discernment. It is a tree of life to those who take hold of it, and those who keep firm hold of it will be called happy.”—Prov. 3:13, 18.

⁶ However, to be lastingly happy, it is vital that we not only read God’s Word but apply it. Confirming the importance of putting into practice what we learn, Jesus said: “If you know these things, happy you are if you do them.” (John 13:17; **read James 1:25.**) This is the key to satisfying your spiritual need and being lastingly happy. But how can we be happy when there is so much that can rob us of happiness? Let us examine what Jesus next said in the Sermon on the Mount.

QUALITIES THAT ENHANCE HAPPINESS

⁷ “*Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted.*” (Matt. 5:4) Some may wonder, ‘How is it possible for those who mourn to be happy?’ Jesus did not have in mind all who mourn for any sort of reason. Even wicked people bemoan the distressing difficulties that characterize these “critical times hard to deal with.” (2 Tim. 3:1) But their self-centered mourning does not draw them closer to Jehovah; hence, it does not lead them toward happiness. Jesus must have had in mind people who are conscious of their spiritual need and therefore mourn the appalling spiritual conditions that prevail. They may recog-

4, 5. How can we gain and maintain happiness?

6. Our lasting happiness depends on what?

7. How can those who mourn be happy?

nize their own sinful state and the heart-breaking circumstances that have resulted from human sinfulness. Jehovah takes note of such sincere mourners; he comforts and blesses them with spiritual consolation, happiness, and life.—**Read Ezekiel 5:11; 9:4.**

⁸ “*Happy are the mild-tempered, since they will inherit the earth.*” (Matt. 5:5) How can being mild-tempered contribute to happiness? After coming to an accurate knowledge of the truth, individuals change. At one time, they may have been harsh, quarrelsome, and aggressive. But now they have clothed themselves with “the new personality” and display “the tender affections of compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, and patience.” (Col. 3:9-12) As a result, they now enjoy a peaceful, loving, and happier life. Furthermore, God’s Word promises that such ones will “inherit the earth.”—Ps. 37:8-10, 29.

⁹ In what sense do the mild-tempered “inherit the earth”? Jesus’ spirit-anointed disciples inherit the earth when they rule over it as kings and priests. (Rev. 20:6) Millions of others who do not have the heavenly calling, however, will inherit the earth in the sense that they will be allowed to live here forever in perfection, peace, and happiness. These are the same ones who are happy because of “*hungering and thirsting for righteousness.*” (Matt. 5:6) Their spiritual hunger and thirst for righteousness will be fully satisfied in the new world. (2 Pet. 3:13) When God

8. Explain how being mild-tempered contributes to happiness.

9. (a) In what sense do the mild-tempered “inherit the earth”? (b) Why can “those hungering and thirsting for righteousness” be happy?

has finally eliminated all wickedness, the happiness of righteous ones will never again be undermined by lawlessness and unrighteousness.—Ps. 37:17.

¹⁰ “*Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy.*” (Matt. 5:7) A Hebrew verb associated with mercy means “to glow, to feel warm with tender emotion; . . . to be compassionate.” Similarly, the Greek verb includes the sense of feeling sympathy for someone else. However, mercy is more than a tender feeling. In the Bible, it includes the active *manifestation* of pity by an *act* of mercy.

¹¹ **Read Luke 10:30-37.** Jesus’ illustration of the neighborly Samaritan vividly portrays what it means to show mercy. Moved by heartfelt compassion and mercy, the Samaritan took positive action to bring relief to the suffering victim. After relating the illustration, Jesus said: “Go and do the same yourself.” Hence, we might ask ourselves: ‘Am I doing the same? Am I doing what the compassionate Samaritan did? Could I more actively display mercy and engage in positive deeds of kindness toward those who are suffering? For instance, could I offer practical help to older fellow Christians, widows, and those who are spiritually fatherless children? Can I take the initiative to “speak consolingly to those who are depressed”?’—1 Thess. 5:14; Jas. 1:27.

¹² How, though, does being merciful result in happiness? When we display

10. What does it mean to be merciful?

11. What can we learn about being merciful from the illustration of the neighborly Samaritan?

12. How does being merciful contribute to our happiness?



Take the initiative to display mercy,
and see how much happiness results
(See paragraph 12)

mercy toward others, we enjoy the happiness that results from giving. Moreover, we know that we are pleasing Jehovah. (Acts 20:35; **read Hebrews 13:16.**) Regarding a person who shows consideration, King David said: “Jehovah will guard him and keep him alive. He will be pronounced happy in the earth.” (Ps. 41: 1, 2) Giving expression to our feelings of compassion will also put us in line to receive Jehovah’s mercy, which in turn can result in our being eternally happy. —Jas. 2:13.

WHY “THE PURE IN HEART” ARE HAPPY

¹³ “Happy are the pure in heart,” Jesus said, “since they will see God.” (Matt. 5:8) To keep our hearts pure, we must be clean on the inside and nurture chaste affections and desires. We need

13, 14. What is the relationship between a pure heart and happiness?

to keep our thoughts clean so as to be spiritually untainted in our devotion to Jehovah.—**Read 2 Corinthians 4:2;** 1 Tim. 1:5.

¹⁴ Those who are pure in heart can enjoy a clean and happy standing before Jehovah, who declared: “Happy are those who wash their robes.” (Rev. 22:14) In what sense do they “wash their robes”? Anointed Christians “wash their robes” in that they are clean in Jehovah’s eyes and will be granted immortal life and enjoy endless happiness in their heavenly position. The great crowd who hope to live on earth can also enjoy a righteous standing as friends of God. They are even now ‘washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb.’—Rev. 7:9, 13, 14.

¹⁵ How, though, do the pure in heart “see God” when, in fact, “no man can see [God] and live”? (Ex. 33:20) The Greek word rendered “see” can carry the sense of “to see with the mind, to perceive, know.” Those who see God with ‘the eyes of the heart’ are those who have really come to know him, appreciating his qualities. (Eph. 1:18) Jesus perfectly reflected God’s personality, so he could say: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father also.”—John 14: 7-9.

¹⁶ In addition to getting to know God’s qualities, true worshippers can “see God” by observing the way he acts in their behalf. (Job 42:5) They also focus ‘their eyes of the heart’ on the wonderful blessings that God holds out for those who strive to remain pure and to serve him loyally. Of course, resurrected anointed ones will in a literal sense see

15, 16. How can the pure in heart “see God”?

Jehovah when they receive their heavenly reward.—1 John 3:2.

HAPPY DESPITE DIFFICULTIES

¹⁷ Jesus next said: “*Happy are the peacemakers.*” (Matt. 5:9) Those who take the initiative to make peace have good reason to be happy. The disciple James wrote: “The fruit of righteousness is sown in peaceful conditions for those who are making peace.” (Jas. 3:18) When we have a strained relationship with someone either in the congregation or in the family, we can plead for God’s help to be peacemakers. Thus, Jehovah’s holy spirit, righteous conduct, and happiness can predominate. Jesus emphasized the importance of taking the initiative to make peace when he said: “If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away. First make your peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift.”—Matt. 5:23, 24.

¹⁸ “*Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake.*” What did Jesus mean? He went on to say: “Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.” (Matt. 5:11, 12) When the apostles were beaten and commanded to stop preaching, “they went out from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing.” Of course, they did not relish the pain of being whipped. Yet, they rejoiced “because they had been counted

worthy to be dishonored in behalf of [Jesus’] name.”—Acts 5:41.

¹⁹ In our time, Jehovah’s people also endure with joy when they suffer in behalf of Jesus’ name or when they face difficult trials. **(Read James 1:2-4.)** Like the apostles, we do not take delight in any kind of suffering. But if we maintain our integrity to God during trials, Jehovah can help us to endure with fortitude. For example, in August 1944, authorities in a totalitarian regime sent Henryk Dornik and his brother to a concentration camp. However, the opposers acknowledged: “It is impossible to persuade them to do anything. Their martyrdom brings them joy.” Brother Dornik explained: “Although I had no desire to be a martyr, suffering with courage and dignity for my loyalty to Jehovah did bring me joy. . . . Fervent prayers drew me closer to Jehovah, and he proved to be a reliable Helper.”

²⁰ When we have the smile of approval of “the happy God,” we can be happy despite religious persecution, opposition at home, sickness, or advanced age. (1 Tim. 1:11) We also experience happiness because of the precious promises of our God, “who cannot lie.” (Titus 1:2) The fulfillment of Jehovah’s promises will be so impressive that the difficulties and trials of the present time will pale into insignificance. In the coming Paradise, the blessings from Jehovah will surpass our imagination. And we will certainly experience unprecedented happiness. Yes, we “will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—Ps. 37:11.

17. What role does peace play in being happy?

18, 19. Why can Christians rejoice even if they are persecuted?

20. Why are we happy to serve “the happy God”?

Do You Know THE TIME?

WHEN you want to know the time, what do you do? You likely glance at your wristwatch or a clock. If a friend asked you for the time, how would you reply? There are different ways of telling time. How so?

Well, let us say that it is one hour and 30 minutes after noon. You might reply that it is 1:30. Depending on where you live and what is customary, you might express the time as 13:30. That way of telling time is based on the system of a 24-hour clock. There are even places where that same time could be expressed as “half two,” meaning 30 minutes before two.

As a reader of the Bible, you might wonder how people in the Bible period told time. There was not just one way. The Hebrew portion of the Bible makes reference to “morning,” “noon,” “midday,” and “evening.” (Gen. 8:11; 19:27; 43:16; Deut. 28:29; 1 Ki. 18:26) On occasion, however, more exact timing is used.

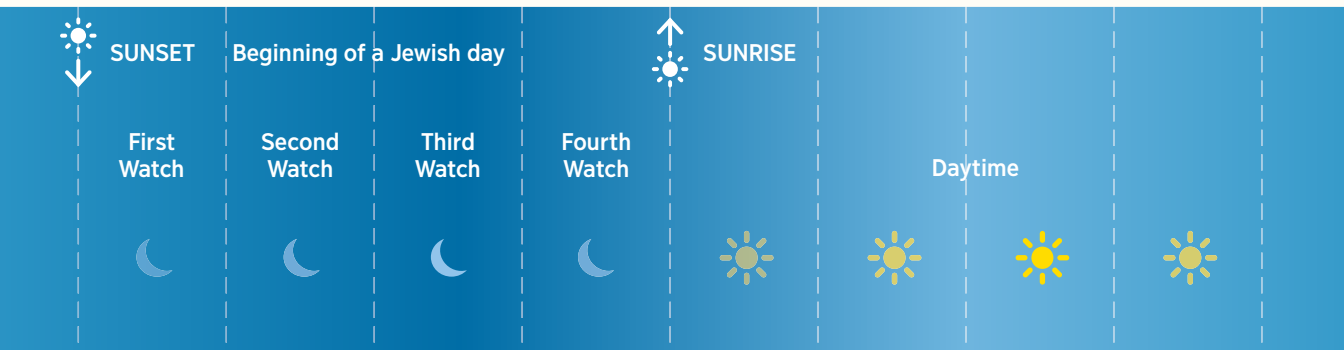
In Bible times, it was customary to use watchmen. They were particularly needed during the night. Centuries before Jesus’ birth, the Israelites divided the night into three periods called watches. (Ps. 63:6) Judges 7:19 mentions “the middle night watch.” By Jesus’ day, the Jews had adopted

the Greek and Roman system of four watch periods during the night.

The Gospels refer to these watches a number of times. For example, it was “in the fourth watch of the night” when Jesus walked on water toward the boat where his disciples were. (Matt. 14:25) In an illustration, Jesus said: “If the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into.”—Matt. 24:43.

Jesus referred to all four watches when he told his disciples: “Keep on the watch, therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether late in the day or at midnight or before dawn or early in the morning.” (Mark 13:35; ftn.) The first of those watches, “late in the day,” ran from sunset till about nine o’clock in the evening. The second, the “midnight” watch, was from about nine o’clock in the evening to midnight. The third watch, referred to as “before dawn,” or “when the rooster crows,” went from midnight to about three o’clock in the morning. It may have been during this watch that a rooster actually did crow on the night that Jesus was arrested. (Mark 14:72) The fourth division of the night, the “early in the morning” watch, ran from about three o’clock in the morning to sunrise.

Consequently, even though today’s timepieces were not available to people back in the Bible period, they had a system for telling the time of day or night.





Almighty yet Considerate

*“[Jehovah] well knows how we are formed,
remembering that we are dust.”—PS. 103:14.*

POWERFUL and influential people often “lord it over” others, even dominating them. (Matt. 20:25; Eccl. 8:9) What a contrast with Jehovah! Even though he is the Almighty, he is most considerate of imperfect humans. He is kind and thoughtful. He shows regard for our feelings and is attentive to our needs. “Remembering that we are dust,” he never asks more of us than we can give.—Ps. 103:13, 14.

² The Bible provides many examples of the considerate way in which Jehovah deals with his servants. Let us focus on three. First, the thoughtful way that God helped young Samuel to deliver a judgment message to High Priest Eli; second, the patient manner in which Jehovah handled Moses’ objections to serving as leader of the Israelites; and third, the considerate way that God led the Israelites out of Egypt. As we reflect on these examples, let us note what they teach us about Jehovah and see lessons we can apply.

1, 2. (a) In contrast with powerful humans, how does Jehovah treat people? (b) What will we consider in this article?

SONGS: 30, 10

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE CONSIDERATE WAY THAT JEHOVAH . . .

helped young Samuel?

commissioned Moses to
lead Israel?

led Israel out of Egypt and
through the Red Sea?

FATHERLY CONSIDERATION FOR A BOY

³ Samuel began “ministering to Jehovah” at the tabernacle at a very early age. (1 Sam. 3:1) One night after Samuel had retired, something most unusual happened.* **(Read 1 Samuel 3:2-10.)** He heard a voice call him by name. Thinking that it was the voice of the aged High Priest Eli, Samuel obediently ran to him and said: “Here I am, for you called me.” Eli denied doing so. When the same thing happened two more times, Eli realized that it was God who was calling Samuel. So he told the boy how to respond, and Samuel obeyed. Why did Jehovah, by means of his angel, not reveal himself to Samuel on the first occasion? The Bible does not say, but the way events unfolded suggests that consideration for young Samuel was an important factor. How so?

⁴ **Read 1 Samuel 3:11-18.** Jehovah’s Law commanded children to respect the aged, especially a chieftain. (Ex. 22:28; Lev. 19:32) Can you imagine Samuel going up to Eli in the morning and boldly telling him God’s stinging judgment message? Of course not! Indeed, the account tells us that Samuel “was afraid to tell Eli of the vision.” However, God made clear to Eli that He was calling Samuel. As a result, Eli took charge of

* Jewish historian Josephus says that Samuel was 12 years old at the time.

3. What unusual thing happened to young Samuel one night, and what question does this raise? (See opening picture.)

4, 5. (a) How did Samuel respond to the assignment God gave him, and how did things work out the following morning? (b) What does the account teach us about Jehovah?

the situation and told Samuel to speak. “[Do not] hide from me a single word of all that he said to you,” Eli commanded. Samuel obediently “told him everything.”

⁵ Samuel’s message would not have been a complete surprise to Eli. It harmonized with that of an unnamed “man of God” who had earlier spoken to the high priest. (1 Sam. 2:27-36) The account involving Samuel and Eli shows us how considerate and wise Jehovah is.

⁶ Are you a young person? If so, the account about young Samuel shows that Jehovah understands the challenges you face and how you feel. Perhaps you are shy and find it hard to share the Kingdom message with adults or to stand out as different among your peers. Be assured that Jehovah wants to help you. So pour out your heart to him in prayer. (Ps. 62:8) Reflect on Bible examples of such young ones as Samuel. And talk with fellow Christians—young or old—who may have overcome challenges like those you are facing. Indeed, they may tell you about times when Jehovah came to their aid, perhaps in ways that they had not expected.

CONSIDERATION FOR MOSES

⁷ When Moses was 80 years old, Jehovah gave him a daunting assignment. Moses was to deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt. (Ex. 3:10) Having served as a shepherd in Midian for 40 years, he was evidently shocked to receive this call. “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of

6. What lessons can we learn from the way God helped young Samuel?

7, 8. How did Jehovah show extraordinary consideration for Moses?

Egypt?” he said. God reassured Moses: “I will prove to be with you.” (Ex. 3:11, 12) He also promised: The elders of Israel “will certainly listen to your voice.” Even so, Moses replied: “Suppose they . . . do not listen?” (Ex. 3:18; 4:1) In effect, Moses contradicted God! But Jehovah remained patient. In fact, he went even further. He empowered Moses to perform miracles, making him the first human on record to have such power.—Ex. 4:2-9, 21.

⁸ Moses still tried to excuse himself, claiming to be a poor speaker. In response, God said: “I will be with you as you speak, and I will teach you what you should say.” Was Moses at last won over? Evidently not, for he meekly asked God to send someone else. At that, Jehovah rightly became angry. But he was not unyielding. Rather, as yet another gesture of consideration for Moses’ feelings, God appointed Aaron as spokesman for Moses.—Ex. 4:10-16.

⁹ What does this account teach us about Jehovah? As Almighty God, he could have frightened Moses into speedy submission. Instead, Jehovah was patient and kind, making an effort to reassure his modest and humble servant. Did this considerate approach work? Absolutely! Moses became an outstanding leader who tried to deal with others in the same mild and considerate way that Jehovah dealt with him.—Num. 12:3.

¹⁰ Lessons we can apply: Are you a husband, a parent, or a congregation elder? If so, you have a measure of authority. How important, then, that you imitate Jehovah by being considerate, kind, and patient when dealing with those under your care! (Col. 3:19-21; 1 Pet. 5:1-3) When you strive to imitate

9. How did Jehovah’s patience and considerate manner help Moses in his assignment?

10. When we imitate Jehovah’s considerate manner, how do we benefit?

Do you imitate Jehovah when dealing with others?
(See paragraph 10)



Jehovah and the Greater Moses, Jesus Christ, you will be both approachable and refreshing to others. (Matt. 11:28, 29) You will also set an example worthy of imitation.—Heb. 13:7.

A FEAR-INSPIRING BUT CONSIDERATE SAVIOR

¹¹ When the Israelites left Egypt in 1513 B.C.E., they may have numbered more than three million. Spanning three or even four generations, there were children, elderly ones, and no doubt some who were infirm or disabled. To lead such a vast crowd out of Egypt certainly called for an understanding and thoughtful Leader. Jehovah, by means of Moses, proved to be such. As a result, the Israelites felt safe as they left the only home they had ever known.—Ps. 78:52, 53.

¹² How did Jehovah make his people feel safe and secure? For one thing, he led them out of Egypt in well-organized “battle formation.” (Ex. 13:18) Such organization surely reassured the Israelites that their God was in control. Also, Jehovah made his presence visibly manifest by means of “a cloud by day and . . . the light of a fire” at night. (Ps. 78:14) In effect, Jehovah was saying: “Do not be afraid. I am with you to guide and protect you.” Indeed, such reassurance was soon needed!

¹³ **Read Exodus 14:19-22.** Picture yourself there, trapped between

11, 12. As Jehovah led the Israelites out of Egypt, how did he make them feel safe and secure?

13, 14. (a) What considerate things did Jehovah do for the Israelites at the Red Sea? (b) How did Jehovah show his power over the Egyptians?

Pharaoh’s forces and the Red Sea. Then God acts. The pillar of cloud moves to the rear of the camp, blocking the Egyptians and keeping them in darkness. Your vast camp, however, is bathed in miraculous light! Then you see Moses stretch out his hand over the sea, and a strong east wind opens a wide path to the other side. In an orderly manner, you, your family, and your domestic animals walk out onto the seabed with the rest of the people. Immediately, you notice something odd. The seabed is not miry or frozen; it is dry and quite firm, making it easy to walk. As a result, even the slowest ones cross safely to the other side.

¹⁴ **Read Exodus 14:23, 26-30.** In the meantime, proud and foolish Pharaoh rushes out onto the seabed in hot pursuit. Again, Moses stretches out his hand over the sea. This time, the two congealed walls of water collapse. The sea rushes in from both sides, like two tsunamis on a collision course. Pharaoh and his hordes do not stand a chance!—Ex. 15:8-10.

¹⁵ We see from this account that Jehovah is a God of order—a quality that helps us to feel safe and secure. (1 Cor. 14:33) Jehovah also shows himself to be a loving shepherd who cares for his people in practical ways. He tenderly embraces them, protecting them from their enemies. How reassuring these truths are to us as we face the end of the present system of things!—Prov. 1:33.

¹⁶ Today, too, Jehovah cares for his

15. What does this account teach you about Jehovah?

16. How can we benefit from reviewing the way that Jehovah delivered the Israelites?



What considerate thing did Jehovah do for the Israelites at the Red Sea?
(See paragraph 13)

people as a group—spiritually and physically. He will continue to do so during the fast-approaching great tribulation. (Rev. 7:9, 10) Hence, whether young or old, sound in body or disabled, God’s people will not panic or cower in fear during the tribulation.* In fact, they will do the very opposite! They will bear in mind these words of Jesus Christ: “Stand up straight and lift up your heads, because your deliverance is getting near.” (Luke 21:28) They will maintain that confidence even in the face of the attack by Gog—a coalition of nations that will wield far more power than did ancient Pharaoh. (Ezek. 38:2, 14-16) Why will God’s people re-

* It is reasonable to conclude that some Armageddon survivors will be disabled. When on earth, Jesus cured people with “every sort of infirmity,” thus giving us a preview of what he will do, not for resurrected ones, but for Armageddon survivors. (Matt. 9:35) Resurrected ones will no doubt have whole, sound bodies.

main confident? They know that Jehovah does not change. He will again prove to be a caring and considerate Savior.—Isa. 26:3, 20.

¹⁷ The examples in this article are just some of many that illustrate the kind and thoughtful way that Jehovah cares for, directs, and delivers his people. As you meditate on such accounts, take note of details that reveal even subtle aspects of Jehovah’s qualities. Doing so will impress those beautiful qualities more deeply on your mind and heart, strengthening your love for God and your faith in him. The next article will look at ways that we can imitate Jehovah in showing consideration for others. We will focus on the family, the Christian congregation, and the field ministry.

17. (a) How can we benefit from Bible accounts about the way that Jehovah cares for his people? (b) What will we consider in the next article?



Be Considerate and Kind in Imitation of Jehovah

*“Happy is anyone who shows consideration
to the lowly one.”—PS. 41:1.*

SONGS: 130, 107

IN WHAT WAYS SHOULD WE SHOW CONSIDERATION . . .

in the family?

in the congregation?

in the field ministry?

GOD’S people are a spiritual family—one marked by love. (1 John 4:16, 21) That love is usually reflected, not in rare heroic acts, but in countless smaller ways, such as by thoughtful words and kind deeds. When we treat others kindly and considerately, we “become imitators of God, as beloved children.”—Eph. 5:1.

² Jesus perfectly imitated his Father. “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down,” said Jesus, “and I will refresh you . . . , for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:28, 29) When we imitate Christ’s example by “[showing] consideration to the lowly one,” we receive our heavenly Father’s favor and find great happiness. (Ps. 41:1) Let us see how we can show consideration for others in the family, in the congregation, and in the field ministry.

1. How is love evident among God’s people?
2. How did Jesus show godlike love?

BE CONSIDERATE IN THE FAMILY

³ Husbands should take the lead in being considerate of others in the family. (Eph. 5:25; 6:4) For example, they are exhorted to dwell with their wives “according to knowledge”—an expression that could also be rendered “showing them consideration; understanding them.” (1 Pet. 3:7; ftn.) Understanding and consideration go hand in hand. For instance, an understanding husband knows that his wife, as his complement, is different from him in many respects, but she is by no means inferior. (Gen. 2:18) He thus shows thoughtful regard for her feelings, treating her with dignity and honor. A wife in Canada said of her husband: “He never belittles my feelings or says, ‘You should not feel that way.’ He is also a good listener. When he helps me to adjust my viewpoint on a matter, he does so with kindness.”

⁴ A thoughtful husband also takes his wife’s feelings into account when he interacts with other women. Never does he flirt with them or show an improper interest in them; nor does he show such interest when using social media or the Internet. (Job 31:1) Yes, he remains loyal to his wife, not just because of his love for her but also because of his love for God and his hatred for what is bad. —**Read Psalm 19:14; 97:10.**

⁵ When a husband looks to his head, Jesus Christ, as a role model, he helps his wife to cultivate “deep respect” for

3. For a husband, how should understanding and consideration go hand in hand? (See opening picture.)

4. In his dealings with other women, how should a husband show consideration for his wife?

5. How can a wife show consideration for her husband?

him. (Eph. 5:22-25, 33) Her respect, in turn, will move her to be considerate of her husband, perhaps when he has to devote extra time to theocratic responsibilities or when problems weigh on his mind. “On occasion, my wife will discern from a change in my demeanor that something is bothering me,” says a husband in Britain. “Then she will apply the principle found at Proverbs 20:5, even when this means waiting for the right time to ‘draw out’ my thoughts if it is a matter that I am free to discuss with her.”

⁶ When parents show consideration for each other, they set a fine example for their children. Parents, of course, have the primary responsibility to teach their children how to be considerate of others. For example, parents can teach them not to run around in the Kingdom Hall. At a social gathering, parents might tell their children to let older ones go ahead of them when lining up for food. Of course, all in the congregation can support the parents. For example, when a child performs a thoughtful deed for us—perhaps opening a door—we should commend the child. Doing so can have a good effect on the young one, impressing on his heart that “there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.”—Acts 20:35.

“CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER” IN THE CONGREGATION

⁷ One time when Jesus was in the Decapolis region, people “brought him a

6. How can all of us encourage children to be considerate of others, and how will children benefit?

7. How did Jesus show consideration for a deaf man, and what lessons can we learn from Jesus’ example?

deaf man with a speech impediment.” (Mark 7:31-35) Instead of healing him in public, Jesus “took him aside” and healed him. Why? The man’s disabilities may have made him feel uncomfortable in a crowd. Perhaps sensing this, Jesus healed him in private. Of course, we cannot perform miraculous cures. But we can—and should—show thoughtful regard for the needs and feelings of our fellow worshippers. The apostle Paul wrote: “Let us consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works.” (Heb. 10:24) Jesus understood how the deaf man felt and treated him thoughtfully. What a fine example for us!

⁸ *Show consideration for the elderly and the infirm.* The Christian congregation is marked, not by mere efficiency, but by love. (John 13:34, 35) That love moves us to go out of our way to help older ones and those with disabilities to attend Christian meetings and to preach the good news. That is so even if what they can do is limited. (Matt. 13:23) Michael, who is confined to a wheelchair, deeply appreciates the help he gets from his family and from the brothers in his field service group. “Because of the help they all give me,” he says, “I am able to attend most meetings and to share regularly in the ministry. I especially like public witnessing.”

⁹ Many Bethel homes have elderly and infirm members. Caring overseers show these faithful servants consideration by arranging for them to share in letter writing and phone witnessing. “We appreciate the privilege of being able to write letters,” says Bill, who is 86 years old and writes to people in isolat-

8, 9. In what ways can we show consideration for the elderly and the infirm? (Give examples.)

ed areas. Nancy, who is nearly 90, comments: “I don’t view letter writing as just stuffing envelopes. This is field service. People need to know the truth!” Ethel, born in 1921, says: “Pain is a part of my life. Some days I have a hard time just getting dressed.” Even so, she enjoys telephone witnessing and has some good return visits. Barbara, who is 85 years old, explains: “Because of my poor health, I find regular field service very difficult. But phone witnessing enables me to speak to others. Thank you, Jehovah!” In less than a year, a group of precious older ones devoted 1,228 hours to the ministry, wrote 6,265 letters, made over 2,000 phone calls, and placed 6,315 publications! Surely, this effort brought joy to Jehovah’s heart!—Prov. 27:11.

¹⁰ *Show consideration at Christian meetings.* We want our brothers to benefit fully from the meetings. Our being considerate can help them to do that. How? One way is to arrive on time so that we do not create needless distractions. Of course, unforeseen events may delay us on occasion. But if we are habitually late, we should give thought to how we can be more considerate. Keep in mind, too, that our hosts are Jehovah and his Son. (Matt. 18:20) They certainly merit our deep respect!

¹¹ Consideration for our brothers also means heeding the instruction: “Let all things take place decently and by arrangement.” (1 Cor. 14:40) Brothers who have parts on a meeting obey that directive by staying within their allotted time.

10. How can we help our brothers to benefit fully from Christian meetings?

11. Why should those who have parts on a meeting apply the direction given at 1 Corinthians 14:40?

Show Consideration to Those Taking the Lead

At times, a brother who is somewhat prominent or well-known might visit our congregation or the convention we attend. He may be a circuit overseer, a Bethelite, a member of the Branch Committee, a member of the Governing Body, or a helper to the Governing Body.

We rightly want to give such faithful servants “extraordinary consideration in love because of their work.” (1 Thess. 5:12,

13) We can show that consideration by treating such ones as our brothers and not as celebrities. Some have fallen short in this regard. How? By aggressively trying to photograph well-known ones, by taking photos of them without their permission and posting such photos on social media, or by asking them to sign their books or Bibles. Do you not agree that this attitude reflects the world’s spirit?—Eph. 2:1, 2.

Jehovah wants his servants to be humble and modest—especially those who carry weighty responsibilities! (Matt. 23:11, 12) So let us treat responsible brothers as humble ministers, not demanding to take photographs.* —Mic. 6:8; 1 Cor. 10:31.

* See the box “Love ‘Does Not Behave Indecently’” in *The Watchtower* of January 2016, p. 27.

Their doing so reflects consideration not only for the next speaker but also for the congregation. Some brothers may have to travel a long way to their homes. Others may depend on public transportation. And some might have unbelieving mates who are impatiently awaiting their return.

¹² Spiritual shepherds who work hard in the congregation and take a zealous lead in the ministry are themselves worthy of special consideration. **(Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13.)** No doubt you appreciate the efforts the elders make in your behalf. By all means, then, show it by your willing cooperation and

12. Why are hardworking elders worthy of “extraordinary consideration in love”? (See the box “Show Consideration to Those Taking the Lead.”)

support. After all, “they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account.”—Heb. 13:7, 17.

BE CONSIDERATE IN THE MINISTRY

¹³ Concerning Jesus, Isaiah foretold: “No crushed reed will he break, and no smoldering wick will he extinguish.” (Isa. 42:3) Jesus’ love for people made him empathetic. He understood the feelings of those who were figuratively like a bruised reed or the wick of an oil lamp about to go out. As a result, he was considerate, kind, and patient. Even children were drawn to him. (Mark 10:14) Of course, we do not have Jesus’ insight and teaching ability! But we can

13. What can we learn from the way Jesus treated people?

—and should—be considerate of the people in our territory. That includes how we speak to them, when we do so, and for how long.

¹⁴ *How should we speak to people?* Today, countless millions have been “skinned and thrown about” by corrupt and heartless commercial, political, and religious leaders. (Matt. 9:36) As a result, many people are cynical and without hope. How important, then, that we be kind and compassionate in our choice of words and also in our tone of voice! Indeed, many are drawn to our message not only because of our Bible knowledge or sound reasoning but also because of our genuine interest in them and our thoughtful manner.

¹⁵ There are many practical ways to show consideration for the people to whom we witness. Questions, for example, are a fine teaching aid. We should phrase our questions kindly and respectfully. A pioneer whose territory included many who were reserved and shy learned not to ask questions that might be embarrassing. These included questions that the person might be unable to answer or might answer incorrectly. For example, he avoided such questions as, ‘Do you know God’s name?’ or ‘Do you know what God’s Kingdom is?’ Instead, he would say something like, “I have learned from the Bible that God has a personal name. May I show you what that name is?” Of course, cultures and people vary, so we do not need rules. However, we should *always* be consid-

erate and respectful, which includes getting to know the local people well.

¹⁶ *When should we call on our neighbors?* When we go from door to door, we are uninvited guests. How important, then, that we call at a time when people might be more inclined to converse! (Matt. 7:12) For example, do people in your territory like to sleep longer on weekends? If so, you may be able to start your ministry by doing street work, public witnessing, or return visits on people you know will be up and about.

¹⁷ *How long should we stay?* Many people are very busy, so it may be appropriate to keep your visits brief, at least initially. It is better to finish a discussion sooner than to stay too long. (1 Cor. 9:20-23) When people see that we are aware of their circumstances or busy schedules, they may be more willing to have us call back. Clearly, the fruitage of God’s spirit should be reflected in our ministry. When it is, we truly become “God’s fellow workers”—even a means by which Jehovah may draw someone to the truth.—1 Cor. 3:6, 7, 9.

¹⁸ So let us make every effort to be considerate of others—in the family, in the congregation, and in the field ministry. When we do, we will receive many blessings both now and in the future. Says Psalm 41:1, 2: “Happy is anyone who shows consideration to the lowly one; Jehovah will rescue him in the day of calamity. . . . He will be pronounced happy in the earth.”

14. Why should we take special care in how we talk to people?

15. In what practical ways can we be considerate of the people to whom we witness?

16, 17. How may consideration for our neighbors influence (a) the time we call at their homes? (b) how long we spend talking to a person?

18. When we are considerate of others, what blessings may we hope to receive?



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