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# “Look Out That No One Takes You Captive”!

*“Look out that no one takes you captive by means of the philosophy and empty deception according to human tradition.”—COL. 2:8.*

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## SONG 96

God’s Own Book—A Treasure

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## PREVIEW

Satan is a master at fooling people. He has tricked many into believing that they are free, though in reality he has taken them captive. This article will analyze a number of tactics Satan uses to deceive people.

**SATAN** wants to turn us against Jehovah. To achieve his goal, he tries to influence our thinking, in effect, to bring our mind into captivity and make it obedient to him. He tries to persuade or to deceive us into following him by appealing to our desires.—**Read Colossians 2:4, 8.**

<sup>2</sup> Are we really in serious danger of being misled by Satan? Yes, we are! Remember, Paul did not write the warning recorded at Colossians 2:8 to unbelievers. He wrote it to Christians who had been anointed with holy spirit. (Col. 1:2, 5) Those Christians were in danger back then, and we are in even greater danger today. (1 Cor. 10:12) Why? Satan has been confined to the vicinity of the earth, and he is focused on misleading God’s loyal servants. (Rev. 12:9, 12, 17) In addition, we are living during a time when wicked men and impostors are advancing “from bad to worse.”—2 Tim. 3:1, 13.

<sup>3</sup> In this article, we will discuss how Satan uses “empty deception” to try to influence our thinking. We will identify three of his “crafty acts,” or “schemes.” (Eph. 6:11; ftn.) Then, in the following

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1. According to Colossians 2:4, 8, how does Satan try to bring our mind into captivity?

2-3. (a) Why should we pay attention to the warning recorded at Colossians 2:8? (b) What will we consider in this article?

article, we will consider how to counteract any negative effects his tactics may have had on our thinking. First, though, let us consider what we can learn from the way Satan misled the Israelites after they entered the Promised Land.

## TEMPTED TO COMMIT IDOLATRY

<sup>4</sup> Satan cleverly tempted the Israelites to commit idolatry. How did he do so? He took advantage of their need to provide food for themselves. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they had to change their methods of growing food. While in Egypt, the Israelites irrigated the farmland by using water drawn from the Nile. However, the agricultural system in the Promised Land was based, not on water drawn from a huge river system, but on water gained from seasonal rains, as well as from the dew that watered the vegetation. (Read Deuteronomy 11:10-15; Isa. 18:4, 5) Therefore, the Israelites had to learn new farming methods. That would not be easy because the majority of those who had any farming experience had died in the wilderness.

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah explained to his people that their cir-

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4-6. According to Deuteronomy 11:10-15, what change in farming methods did the Israelites have to make when they settled in the Promised Land?

cumstances had changed. Then he added the following warning, which at first glance may seem unrelated to the subject of agriculture: “Be careful not to let your heart be enticed to go astray and worship other gods and bow down to them.” (Deut. 11:16, 17) Why did Jehovah warn against worshipping false gods while he was speaking about learning new farming methods?

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah knew that the Israelites would be tempted to learn some local farming techniques from the pagan people around them. Of course, their

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How was Satan able to change the thinking of Israelite farmers?  
(See paragraphs 4-6)



neighbors were much more experienced than the Israelites were, and God's people could learn some useful skills from them, but there was a danger. The thinking of those Canaanite farmers was affected by their belief in Baal. They viewed Baal as the owner of the sky and the giver of rain. Jehovah did not want his people to be deceived by such false beliefs. However, time and time again, the Israelites chose to worship Baal. (Num. 25:3, 5; Judg. 2:13; 1 Ki. 18:18) Now notice how Satan was able to take the Israelites captive.

### THREE TACTICS SATAN USED TO TAKE THE ISRAELITES CAPTIVE

<sup>7</sup> The first tactic Satan used was that of *appealing to a normal desire* to see the land watered by rain. There was very little rain in the Promised Land from late April through September each year. Life and prosperity depended on the rain that usually started about October. Satan deceived the Israelites into believing that to prosper, they had to adopt the practices of their pagan neighbors. Those neighbors believed that certain rituals were needed to get their gods to act and bring the needed rain. Those who

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7. What test of faith did the Israelites encounter when they entered the Promised Land?

lacked faith in Jehovah believed that this was the only way to avoid a prolonged drought, so they performed pagan rituals in honor of the false god Baal.

<sup>8</sup> Satan used a second tactic on the Israelites. He *appealed to immoral desires*. The pagan nations worshipped their gods by engaging in grossly immoral acts. This perverted form of worship included both female and male temple prostitution. Homosexuality and other forms of sexual immorality not only were tolerated but became normal! (Deut. 23:17, 18; 1 Ki. 14:24) The pagans believed that these rituals encouraged their gods to make the land fertile. Many Israelites were attracted by the pagans' sexually immoral rituals and allowed themselves to be lured into serving false gods. In reality, they were taken captive by Satan.

<sup>9</sup> Satan used a third tactic. He *blurred the Israelites' view of Jehovah*. In the days of the prophet Jeremiah, Jehovah declared that the false prophets made His people forget His name "because of Baal." (Jer. 23:27) God's people apparently stopped using Jehovah's name and substituted it with the name

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8. What is a second tactic Satan used? Explain.

9. In line with Hosea 2:16, 17, how did Satan blur the Israelites' view of Jehovah?

Baal, which means “Owner” or “Master.” This act would blur the line between Jehovah and Baal in the minds of the Israelites, making it easier for them to combine the rituals of Baal worship with worship of Jehovah.—Read Hosea 2:16, 17 and footnote.

## SATAN’S TACTICS TODAY

<sup>10</sup> Satan uses the same tactics today. He captures people by appealing to natural desires, promoting sexual immorality, and blurring people’s view of Jehovah. Let us consider that last tactic first.

<sup>11</sup> *Satan blurs people’s view of Jehovah.* After the death of Jesus’ apostles, some who claimed to be Christians began to spread false teachings. (Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:3) These apostates started to blur the identity of the only true God. For example, they stopped using the divine name in their copies of the Bible and preferred such expressions as “Lord.” By removing God’s personal name and replacing it with “Lord,” they made it difficult for a Bible reader to see how Jehovah is different from the other “lords” mentioned in the Scriptures. (1 Cor. 8:5) They used the same term, “Lord,” for Jehovah and for Jesus, making it difficult to understand that

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10. What tactics does Satan use today?

11. How has Satan blurred people’s view of Jehovah?



How has Satan used false religion to cater to immoral desires?  
(See paragraph 12)

Jehovah and his Son are different individuals with distinct positions. (John 17:3) This confusion contributed to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity—a doctrine not taught in God’s Word. As a result, many see God as mysterious and believe that we cannot know him. What a lie!—Acts 17:27.

<sup>12</sup> *Satan appeals to immoral desires.* In the days of ancient Israel, Satan used false religion to promote immorality. Today, he does the same. False religion tolerates and even promotes immoral conduct. Consequently, many who claim to serve God have abandoned his clear standards of morality. The apostle Paul describes in his letter to the Romans

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12. What has false religion promoted, and with what result, as explained at Romans 1:28-31?

what has been the result. (Read Romans 1:28-31.) Among “the things not fitting” are all forms of sexual immorality, including homosexuality. (Rom. 1:24-27, 32; Rev. 2:20) How important it is for us to stick to the Bible’s clear teachings!

<sup>13</sup> *Satan appeals to natural desires.* We have a natural desire to learn skills that can help us provide for ourselves and our families. (1 Tim. 5:8) Often, we can gain those skills by attending school and being diligent students. But we must be cautious. The educational system in many countries teaches students not only practical skills but also human philosophy. Students are encouraged to question the existence of God and to disregard the Bible. They are told that the theory of evolution is the only intelligent explanation for the origin of life. (Rom. 1:21-23) Such teachings are opposed to “the wisdom of God.”—1 Cor. 1:19-21; 3:18-20.

<sup>14</sup> Human philosophy ignores or contradicts Jehovah’s righteous standards. It does not nurture the fruitage of God’s spirit but, rather, “the works of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:19-23) It generates pride and arrogance, and the result is that people become “lovers of themselves.” (2 Tim. 3:2-4) These qualities are

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13. What is another tactic that Satan uses?

14. What does human philosophy nurture?

the opposite of the meek, humble spirit that God’s servants are encouraged to have. (2 Sam. 22:28) Some Christians who have pursued university education have had their minds molded by human thinking rather than by God’s thinking. Let us consider just one example of what can happen.

<sup>15</sup> A sister who has been in full-time service for over 15 years says: “As a baptized Witness, I had read and heard about the dangers of pursuing university education, but I dismissed such warnings. I

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**15-16.** What do you learn from the experience of one sister?

How can our thinking be warped by human philosophy?  
(See paragraphs 14-16)



thought that the counsel did not apply to me.” What challenges did she face? She admits: “Studying for my courses took so much time and effort that I was too busy to linger in prayer to Jehovah the way I used to, too exhausted to enjoy Bible discussions with others, and too tired to prepare well for the meetings. Thankfully, once I realized that being immersed in higher education was damaging my relationship with Jehovah, I knew I had to stop. And I did.”

<sup>16</sup> What effect did higher education have on this sister’s thinking? She answers: “I am ashamed to admit that the education I pursued taught me to be critical of others, especially my brothers and sisters, to expect too much of them, and to isolate myself from them. It took me a long time to unlearn these lessons. That time in my life showed me just how dangerous it is to ignore the warnings given by our heavenly Father through his organization. Jehovah knew me better than I knew myself. If only I had listened!”

<sup>17</sup> Be determined never to be taken captive “by means of the philosophy and empty deception” of Satan’s world. Continually guard against Satan’s tac-

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17. (a) What should be our determination? (b) What will we consider in the next article?

tics. (1 Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor. 2:11) Never allow him to blur your view of Jehovah. Live by Jehovah’s high moral standards. And do not let Satan trick you into ignoring Jehovah’s advice. But what if you detect that you have already been affected by the thinking of this world? The next article will show how God’s Word can help us overturn even “strongly entrenched” thoughts and habits.—2 Cor. 10:4, 5.

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 5:** Israelites associating with the Canaanites are being tempted to engage in Baal worship and immorality. **Page 9:** An advertisement from a church that tolerates homosexuality. **Page 11:** A young sister has enrolled in a university. She and her classmates are taken in by their professor’s idea that science and technology can solve all mankind’s problems. Later, at the Kingdom Hall, she is disinterested and critical.

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#### WHAT TACTICS HAS SATAN USED TO . . .

- blur people’s view of Jehovah?
- appeal to immoral desires?
- appeal to natural desires?

# Overturn Every Reasoning That Is Against the Knowledge of God!

*“We are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.”—2 COR. 10:5.*

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## **SONG 124**

Ever Loyal

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## **PREVIEW**

For better or worse, our thinking is influenced by our background, our culture, and our education. We may find that certain wrong attitudes have become firmly entrenched in our personality. This article will show us how we can gain control over any wrong tendencies we may have developed.

**“STOP,” warned the apostle Paul. Stop what? “Stop being molded by this system of things.” (Rom. 12:2) Paul addressed those words to the first-century Christians. Why did he give such strong admonition to men and women who were dedicated to God and anointed with holy spirit?—Rom. 1:7.**

**<sup>2</sup> Paul was concerned because some Christians were apparently being influenced by the unwholesome reasonings and philosophies promoted by Satan’s world. (Eph. 4:17-19) That can happen to any one of us. In a desperate attempt to turn us away from Jehovah, Satan, the god of this system of things, uses various tactics. One of them is that of exploiting any tendency we may have toward selfish ambition or self-promotion. He may even use certain aspects of our background, our culture, or our education to bring us over to his way of thinking.**

**<sup>3</sup> Is it possible for us to root out things that are “strongly entrenched” in our minds? (2 Cor. 10:4) Notice how Paul answers: “We are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are bringing every**

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- 1. What warning did the apostle Paul write to anointed Christians?**
  - 2-3. How does Satan try to turn us against Jehovah, but how can we root out things that are “strongly entrenched” in our minds?**

thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:5) Yes, with Jehovah’s help we can actually gain control over wrong reasonings. Just as medicine can counteract the effects of poison, God’s Word can help us to counteract the poisonous effects of Satan’s world.

## “MAKING YOUR MIND OVER”

<sup>4</sup> Think back to the changes you needed to make when you first accepted the truth of God’s Word and decided to serve Jehovah. For many of us, this involved giving up some form of wrong conduct. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) How grateful we are for Jehovah’s help in overcoming such sinful practices!

<sup>5</sup> However, we must never become complacent. Even though we stopped committing serious sins that we engaged in before baptism, we still need to be diligent about avoiding anything that would tempt us to return to those former deeds. How can we do that? Paul answers: “Stop being molded by this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over.” (Rom. 12:2) So a twofold action is required. First, we need to “stop being molded,” or

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4. What changes did many of us have to make when we first accepted the truth?

5. What twofold action is described at Romans 12:2?

shaped, by this world. Second, we need to “be transformed” by making our mind over.

<sup>6</sup> The transformation Paul had in mind involves more than a superficial change in appearance. It touches every fiber of our being. (See the box “Transformed or Disguised?”) We need to make

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6. What do we learn from the idea behind Jesus’ words recorded at Matthew 12:43-45?



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## Transformed or Disguised?

The Greek word translated “transformed” at Romans 12:2 indicates a change in form or composition, like the change of a caterpillar into a butterfly. To be transformed means to change what we are inside—our character, our nature. By contrast, the Greek word translated “disguising” at 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 refers to a change that is outward only, a superficial change in appearance.

over our mind—our innermost attitudes, feelings, and inclinations. So all of us need to ask ourselves, ‘Are the changes I am making to become a Christian only skin-deep, or am I truly becoming a Christian deep within?’ The difference is important. In his words recorded at **Matthew 12:43-45**, Jesus indicated what needs to be done. (Read.) The idea behind those words highlights this important truth: It is not enough to get rid of wrong thoughts; we need to fill the void with godly thinking.

## **“BE MADE NEW IN YOUR DOMINANT MENTAL ATTITUDE”**

<sup>7</sup> Is it possible to change our basic inclinations or who we really are inside? God’s Word answers: “You should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude, and should put on the new personality that was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty.” (Eph. 4:23, 24) Yes, it is possible to change what we are inside, but it is not easy to do. We need to do more than just suppress wrong desires and actions. We need to change our “dominant mental attitude.” That involves changing our desires, our tendencies, and our motivations. This requires continuous action.

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7. How can we change what we are inside?

**<sup>8</sup> Let us consider the example of a brother who had a violent background. After he stopped drinking and fighting, he qualified for baptism, giving a wonderful witness in the small community where he lived. But one evening, shortly after his baptism, he faced an unexpected test. A drunk man came to his home and challenged him to a fight. Initially our brother resisted his urge to fight. But when the man eventually blasphemed Jehovah's name, it was too much for our new brother. He went out and beat up the man. What was the problem? Although his study of the Bible had helped him to suppress his violent tendencies, he had not yet been able to change his dominant mental attitude. In other words, he had not changed who he really was inside.**

**<sup>9</sup> However, this brother did not give up. (Prov. 24: 16) With the help of the elders, he continued to make good progress. He eventually qualified to be an elder. Then one evening, right outside of the Kingdom Hall, he came face-to-face with a challenge similar to the one he had confronted years earlier. A drunk man was about to beat up one of the other elders. What did our brother do? In a calm, humble manner, he reasoned with the drunk man, eased the**

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**8-9.** How does the experience of one brother highlight the need to change what we are inside?

tension, and helped the staggering man to get home. What had happened? Our brother had changed his dominant mental attitude. Deep within, he had been transformed into a peaceable, humble person—all to Jehovah’s praise!

<sup>10</sup> These changes do not take place overnight; nor do they occur automatically. We may need to exert “earnest effort” over a period of years. (2 Pet. 1:5) It is not as if being “in the truth” for a certain length of time were enough. We need to do our utmost to change our inner self. A number of basic steps will help us to make this change. Let us examine some of these.

## HOW TO CHANGE OUR DOMINANT MENTAL ATTITUDE

<sup>11</sup> *Prayer* is the important first step. We need to pray as did the psalmist: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and put within me a new spirit, a steadfast one.” (Ps. 51:10) We must acknowledge the need to change our dominant mental attitude and ask Jehovah for help. How can we be sure that Jehovah will help us to make the change? We can be encouraged

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10. What is involved in making these changes?

11. How does prayer help us to change our dominant mental attitude?

by Jehovah's promise regarding the hard-hearted Israelites in Ezekiel's day: "I will give them a unified heart, and I will put a new spirit in them . . . and give them a heart of flesh, [that is, one sensitive to God's guidance]." (Ezek. 11:19; ftn.) Jehovah was willing to help those Israelites to change, and he is willing to help us too.

<sup>12</sup> *Meditation* is the second vital step. As we peer into God's Word each day, we need to take the time to meditate, or to think deeply, on what thoughts and feelings we need to change. (Read Psalm 119:59; Heb. 4:12; Jas. 1:25) We must identify any tendencies we may have to be attracted to human philosophies. We need to admit honestly what our weaknesses are and then work hard to get rid of those weaknesses.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, ask yourself: 'Is there a trace of envy or jealousy in my heart?' (1 Pet. 2:1) 'Do I feel a measure of pride because of my background, education, or financial status?' (Prov. 16:5) 'Do I look down on others who do not have the same things I have or who are from a different racial background?' (Jas. 2:2-4) 'Do I feel attracted to what

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12-13. (a) According to Psalm 119:59, on what do we need to meditate? (b) What questions should you ask yourself?

Satan’s world offers?’ (1 John 2:15-17) ‘Do I feel drawn to immoral and violent entertainment?’ (Ps. 97:10; 101:3; Amos 5:15) The answers to these personal questions may highlight areas that you need to work on. By conquering what might be “strongly entrenched” reasonings in our hearts, we will please our heavenly Father.—Ps. 19:14.

<sup>14</sup> *Choosing good association* is the third necessary step. Whether we realize it or not, we are strongly influenced by those with whom we associate. (Prov. 13:20) At work or in school, we are likely surrounded by those who will not help us to develop godly thinking. However, we can find the best type of association at our Christian meetings. There is where we can be motivated, or stirred up, to “love and fine works.”—Heb. 10:24, 25, ftn.

## BE “STABILIZED IN THE FAITH”

<sup>15</sup> Remember, though, Satan is determined to change our thinking. He uses every type of reasoning to counteract the influence of the truth of God’s Word.

<sup>16</sup> Satan continues to ask the same question he

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14. Why is choosing good association so vital?

15-16. How does Satan try to change our thinking?

# 1 PRAYER

“Put within me a new spirit,  
a steadfast one.”—Ps. 51:10.

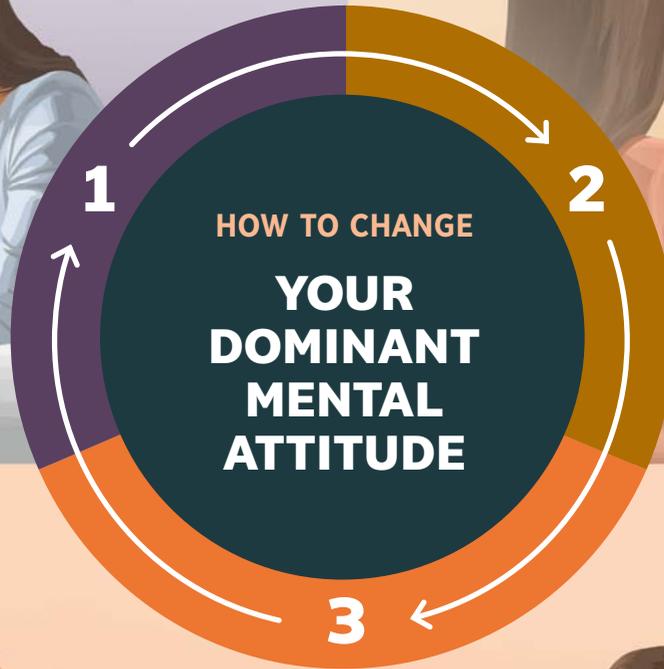
**Talk to Jehovah:** Admit that you need to change; ask God for the help to do it.



# 2 MEDITATION

“I have examined my ways,  
in order to turn my feet back  
to your reminders.”—Ps. 119:59.

**Analyze yourself:** ‘Do I sense jealousy or pride lurking in my heart? Am I drawn to immoral entertainment?’



HOW TO CHANGE  
YOUR  
DOMINANT  
MENTAL  
ATTITUDE



# 3 ASSOCIATION

“The one walking with the  
wise will become wise.”  
—Prov. 13:20.

**Assess your relationships:**  
‘Do I spend unnecessary time  
with those of the world? Do  
my friends help me think  
God’s thoughts?’



asked Eve in the garden of Eden: “Did God *really* say that . . . ?” (Gen. 3:1) In the world under Satan’s control, we often hear challenging questions, such as these: ‘Does God *really* not approve of same-sex marriage? Does God *really* not want you to celebrate Christmas and birthdays? Does your God *really* expect you to refuse a blood transfusion? Does a loving God *really* expect you to avoid association with disfellowshipped loved ones?’

<sup>17</sup> We need to be convinced of our beliefs. If we leave challenging questions unanswered in our minds, they can become serious doubts. Those doubts could eventually distort our thinking and destroy our faith. What, then, do we need to do? God’s Word tells us to transform our minds, so that we may *prove to ourselves* “the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) By regular study, we can prove to ourselves the truths we have learned from the Bible. We can be fully convinced that Jehovah’s standards are right. Then, like a tree with solid roots, we will be firmly rooted, “stabilized in the faith.”—Read Colossians 2:6, 7.

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17. What should we do when we are faced with questions that challenge our beliefs, and what does Colossians 2:6, 7 show can be the result?

<sup>18</sup> No one else can stabilize your faith for you, so continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude. Pray constantly; plead for the help of Jehovah’s spirit. Meditate deeply; continue to examine your thinking and motives. Seek good associates; surround yourself with individuals who will help you to transform your thinking. By doing so, you will counteract the poisonous effects of Satan’s world and successfully overturn “reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.” —2 Cor. 10:5.

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**18.** What will help us to counteract the poisonous effects of Satan’s world?

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#### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What twofold action is set out at Romans 12:2?
- Changing our dominant mental attitude involves what three things?
- How can we apply the counsel found at Colossians 2:6, 7?

# Rely on Jehovah When Under Stress

*“I am . . . under great stress.”—1 SAM. 1:15.*

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## **SONG 30**

My Father, My God and Friend

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## **PREVIEW**

Excessive or prolonged stress can harm us physically and emotionally. How can Jehovah help us? We will consider how Jehovah helped Elijah deal with stress. Other Bible examples will show us how to turn to Jehovah when we are under stress.

IN HIS prophecy about the last days, Jesus said: “Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with . . . anxieties of life [or “anxieties over livelihood; worries of daily life,” *nwtsty* ftn.]” (Luke 21:34) We need to listen to that warning. Why? At present, we must deal with the same type of stressful problems that everyone faces.

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes, we must face a number of stressful problems at the same time. Consider the following examples. A Witness named John,\* who suffers from multiple sclerosis, was devastated when his wife abandoned him after 19 years of marriage. Then his two daughters stopped serving Jehovah. A couple named Bob and Linda faced a different set of challenges. They both lost their jobs, and then they lost their home. In addition to those problems, Linda was diagnosed with a potentially fatal heart-related illness, and another disease began to damage her immune system.

<sup>3</sup> We can be sure that our Creator and loving

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\* Names in this article have been changed.

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1. Why must we listen to Jesus’ warning?
  2. What stressful problems do our brothers and sisters face?
  3. According to Philippians 4:6, 7, of what can we be sure?

Father, Jehovah, understands how stress affects us. And he wants to help us deal with the challenges we face. (Read **Philippians 4:6, 7.**) God’s Word contains many accounts that describe the challenges his servants endured. It also records how Jehovah helped them deal with those stressful situations. Let us consider a few examples.

### **ELIJAH—“A MAN WITH FEELINGS LIKE OURS”**

<sup>4</sup> Elijah served Jehovah during difficult times and faced serious challenges. King Ahab, one of the unfaithful kings in Israel’s history, married Jezebel, an evil worshipper of Baal. The two of them filled the land with Baal worship and murdered many of Jehovah’s prophets. Elijah managed to escape. He also survived a devastating famine by relying on Jehovah. (1 Ki. 17:2-4, 14-16) In addition, Elijah relied on Jehovah when he confronted the prophets and worshippers of Baal. He urged the Israelites to serve Jehovah. (1 Ki. 18:21-24, 36-38) Elijah had plenty of evidence that Jehovah was supporting him during those stressful times.

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4. What challenges did Elijah face, and how did he feel about Jehovah?

**<sup>5</sup> Read 1 Kings 19:1-4.** Elijah became afraid, however, when Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him. So he fled to the area of Beer-sheba. He became so discouraged that “he asked that he might die.” What made him feel that way? Elijah was an imperfect man, “a man with feelings like ours.” (Jas. 5:17) Perhaps he felt overwhelmed by stress and physical exhaustion. It seems that Elijah thought

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**5-6.** According to 1 Kings 19:1-4, how did Elijah feel, and how did Jehovah show that he loved Elijah?

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Jehovah sent an angel to help Elijah regain strength  
(See paragraphs 5-6)



that his efforts to promote pure worship had been futile, that nothing in Israel had improved, and that he was the only one still serving Jehovah. (1 Ki. 18: 3, 4, 13; 19:10, 14) We may be surprised by the reaction of this faithful prophet. But Jehovah understood Elijah's feelings.

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah did not scold Elijah for expressing his feelings. Instead, he helped Elijah regain strength. (1 Ki. 19:5-7) Later, Jehovah kindly adjusted Elijah's thinking by demonstrating His awesome power. Jehovah then pointed out that he still had 7,000 in Israel who refused to worship Baal. (1 Ki. 19:11-18) In practical ways, Jehovah showed Elijah that He loved him.

## HOW JEHOVAH WILL HELP US

<sup>7</sup> Are you dealing with a stressful situation? How comforting it is for us to know that Jehovah understood Elijah's feelings! It reassures us that he also understands our emotional struggles. He knows our limitations, and he even knows what we are thinking and feeling. (Ps. 103:14; 139:3, 4) If we imitate Elijah by relying on Jehovah, he will help

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7. What reassurance do we gain from Jehovah's way of helping Elijah?

us deal with problems that cause us stress.—Ps. 55:22.

<sup>8</sup> Stress can cause you to think negatively, making you feel discouraged. If that happens, remember that Jehovah will help you deal with stress. How will he help you? He invites you to share your concerns with him. And he will answer your cries for help. (Ps. 5:3; 1 Pet. 5:7) So pray to Jehovah often about your problems. He will not speak directly to you as he did to Elijah, but he will speak to you through his Word, the Bible, and through his organization. The accounts you read in the Bible can comfort you and give you hope. Also, your brothers and sisters can encourage you.—Rom. 15:4; Heb. 10:24, 25.

<sup>9</sup> When Jehovah told Elijah to delegate responsibility to Elisha, He provided Elijah with a much-needed companion, who no doubt helped him bear his emotional burdens. Likewise, when we confide in a trusted friend, he or she can help us carry our emotional burdens. (2 Ki. 2:2; Prov. 17:17) If you feel that you do not have anyone to confide in, pray to Jehovah to help you find a mature Christian who can provide you with emotional support.

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8. How will Jehovah help you deal with stress?

9. How might a trusted friend help us?

<sup>10</sup> Jehovah helped Elijah to cope with stress and to serve faithfully for many years. Elijah’s experience gives us hope. We may go through periods of severe stress that drain us physically and emotionally. Yet, if we rely on Jehovah, he will give us the power we need to keep serving him.—Read Isaiah 40:28, 29.

### HANNAH, DAVID, AND “ASAPH” RELIED ON JEHOVAH

<sup>11</sup> Other Bible characters also faced great stress. For example, Hannah endured the stigma of being childless as well as the cruel taunting from her rival wife. (1 Sam. 1:2, 6) Hannah’s extreme stress made her so bitter that she wept and lost her appetite.—1 Sam. 1:7, 10.

<sup>12</sup> At times, King David was overwhelmed by stress. Think of the challenges he faced. He was weighed down with guilt for the many mistakes he had made. (Ps. 40:12) His beloved son Absalom rebelled against him, leading to Absalom’s death. (2 Sam. 15:13, 14; 18:33) And one of David’s closest friends betrayed him. (2 Sam. 16:23–17:2; Ps.

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10. How does Elijah’s experience give us hope, and how can the promise recorded at Isaiah 40:28, 29 help us?

11-13. How did stress affect three of God’s ancient servants?

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What helped the psalmist  
to regain his focus?  
(See paragraphs 13-15)



55:12-14) Many of the psalms David wrote convey his feelings of discouragement as well as his unshakable trust in Jehovah.—Ps. 38:5-10; 94:17-19.

<sup>13</sup> Later a psalmist began to envy the lifestyle of wicked people. He may have been a descendant of the Levite Asaph, and he served at “the grand sanctuary of God.” This psalmist suffered emotional stress, causing him to become unhappy and discontented. He even started to doubt the blessings that come from serving God.—Ps. 73:2-5, 7, 12-14, 16, 17, 21.

**14** The three true worshippers just mentioned all relied on Jehovah for help. They shared their anxiety with him through fervent prayer. They spoke freely to him about the reasons why they were so stressed. And they continued to go to Jehovah's

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**14-15.** What do we learn from the three Bible examples about turning to Jehovah for help?

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At first, a sister felt like isolating herself, but things changed for the better when she looked for ways to help others

(See paragraphs 16-17)



place of worship.—1 Sam. 1:9, 10; Ps. 55:22; 73:17; 122:1.

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah compassionately responded to each one of them. Hannah gained peace of mind. (1 Sam. 1:18) David wrote: “Many are the hardships of the righteous one, but Jehovah rescues him from them all.” (Ps. 34:19) And the psalmist later felt that Jehovah had “taken hold of [his] right hand,” guiding him with loving advice. He sang: “As for me, drawing near to God is good for me. I have made the Sovereign Lord Jehovah my refuge.” (Ps. 73:23, 24, 28) What do we learn from these examples? At times, we will be burdened with problems that cause us stress. But we can cope if we meditate on how Jehovah has helped others, rely on him in prayer, and obey him by doing what he asks us to do.—Ps. 143:1, 4-8.

## RELY ON JEHOVAH AND SUCCEED

<sup>16</sup> Those three examples teach us another important lesson—we should not isolate ourselves from Jehovah and his people. (Prov. 18:1) Nancy, who experienced extreme stress when her husband left her, says: “There were many days when I just did

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16-17. (a) Why should we not isolate ourselves? (b) How can we regain strength?

not want to see or talk to anybody. Yet, the more I isolated myself, the sadder I became.” Things changed when Nancy looked for ways to help others who were experiencing problems. She says: “I listened as others explained their struggles. I noticed that when I felt more empathy for them, I felt less pity for myself.”

<sup>17</sup> We can regain strength by attending congregation meetings. When we are at the meetings, we give Jehovah additional opportunities to be our “helper and comforter.” (Ps. 86:17) There he strengthens us by means of his holy spirit, his Word, and his people. Meetings provide us with an opportunity to enjoy “an interchange of encouragement.” (Rom. 1:11, 12) A sister named Sophia said: “Jehovah and our brotherhood kept me going. Most important for me were our congregation meetings. I have found that the more involved I am in the ministry and my congregation, the better I am able to deal with stress and worry.”

<sup>18</sup> When we feel discouraged, let us remember that Jehovah not only promises permanent relief in the future but also offers to help us deal with stress now. He gives us “the desire and the power” to

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18. If we feel discouraged, what can Jehovah give us?

overcome feelings of discouragement and hopelessness.—Phil. 2:13.

**19 Read Romans 8:37-39.** The apostle Paul assures us that nothing can separate us from God's love. How can we help our brothers and sisters who are trying to cope with stress? The next article will analyze how we can imitate Jehovah by showing compassion and by supporting our brothers and sisters when they are stressed.

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**19.** What assurance does Romans 8:37-39 give us?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 29:** Jehovah's angel gently wakes Elijah from sleep and gives him bread and water. **Page 33:** A psalmist who may have been a descendant of Asaph enjoys writing psalms and singing with his fellow Levites.

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#### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What can we learn from the way Jehovah helped Elijah to cope with stress?
- What do three Bible examples show us about coping with stress?
- What steps can we take to cope with stress?

# Help Others Deal With Stress

*“All of you have unity of mind, fellow feeling, brotherly affection, tender compassion, and humility.”—1 PET. 3:8.*

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## SONG 107

The Divine Pattern of Love

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## PREVIEW

Lot, Job, and Naomi served Jehovah loyally, but they still had to endure stressful times in their lives. This article considers what we can learn from their experiences. It also discusses why it is important for us to be patient and compassionate and to speak consolingly to our brothers and sisters when they are facing challenges.

**JEHOVAH loves us deeply. (John 3:16) We want to imitate our loving Father. So we try to show “fellow feeling, brotherly affection, [and] tender compassion” to all but especially to those who are “related to us in the faith.” (1 Pet. 3:8; Gal. 6:10) When members of our spiritual family face stressful challenges, we want to help them.**

**<sup>2</sup> All who want to be part of Jehovah’s family will face stressful situations. (Mark 10:29, 30) We will likely have to cope with more trials as the end of this system draws near. How can we help one another? Let us consider what we can learn from the Bible accounts about Lot, Job, and Naomi. We will also discuss some challenges that our brothers and sisters face today and see how we can help them cope with problems.**

## **BE PATIENT**

**<sup>3</sup> Lot made a bad decision when he chose to live among the grossly immoral people of Sodom. (Read 2 Peter 2:7, 8.) The region was prosperous, but Lot paid a high price for moving to Sodom.**

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- 1. How can we imitate our loving Father, Jehovah?**
  - 2. What will we discuss in this article?**
  - 3. As evidenced by 2 Peter 2:7, 8, what bad decision did Lot make, and with what results?**

(Gen. 13:8-13; 14:12) His wife apparently became so attached to the city or to some of the people living there that she disobeyed Jehovah. She lost her life when God rained fire and sulfur on the region. And think of Lot's two daughters. They were engaged to men who died in Sodom. Lot lost his home, his possessions and, most painful of all, his wife. (Gen. 19:12-14, 17, 26) During this stressful period, did Jehovah lose patience with Lot? No.

<sup>4</sup> Even though Lot chose to live in Sodom, Jehovah compassionately sent angels to rescue him and his family. However, instead of immediately obeying the angels' urgent command to leave Sodom, Lot "kept lingering." The angels had to seize hold of his hand and help him and his family flee the city. (Gen. 19:15, 16) The angels then told him to run to the mountainous region. But instead of obeying Jehovah, Lot asked to go to a nearby town. (Gen. 19:17-20) Jehovah patiently listened and allowed Lot to go to that town. Lot later became afraid of living there and moved to the mountainous region, the very area Jehovah had told him

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4. How did Jehovah prove to be patient with Lot? (See cover picture.)

to go to in the first place. (Gen. 19:30) What remarkable patience Jehovah showed! How can we imitate him?

<sup>5</sup> Like Lot, a member of our spiritual family may make poor decisions and cause serious problems for himself. If that were to happen, how would we respond? We might be tempted to point out that he is reaping what he has sown, which would be true. (Gal. 6:7) However, we can do better. We can imitate the way that Jehovah helped Lot. How?

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah sent the angels not only to warn Lot but also to *help* him escape the disaster brought on Sodom. Likewise, we may need to warn our brother if we see that he is heading for trouble. But we may also be able to help him. Even if he is slow to apply the Bible-based counsel he receives, we need to be patient. Be like the two angels. Rather than give up and draw away from our brother, we should look for practical ways to assist him. (1 John 3:18) We may need to offer to take him by the hand, figuratively speaking, and help him apply the good advice he is given.—Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

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5-6. How can we apply 1 Thessalonians 5:14 as we imitate God?

<sup>7</sup> Jehovah could have focused on Lot's imperfections. Instead, he later inspired the apostle Peter to refer to Lot as a righteous man. How happy we are that Jehovah overlooks our mistakes! (Ps. 130:3) Can we imitate the way that Jehovah viewed Lot? If we focus on the good qualities of our brothers and sisters, we will be more patient with them. They, in turn, will be more likely to accept the help we offer.

## **BE COMPASSIONATE**

<sup>8</sup> Unlike Lot, Job did not suffer because of some bad decision he made. Yet, he experienced severe calamities, losing his possessions, his status in the community, and his good health. Even worse, he and his wife lost all their children in death. Job was also accused by three false friends. What is one reason why Job's three false comforters lacked compassion for him? They saw only the outward appearance of his situation. As a result, they jumped to wrong conclusions and judged Job harshly. How can we avoid making a similar mistake? Realize that only Jehovah knows all the facts

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7. How can we imitate the way that Jehovah viewed Lot?

8. What will compassion move us to do?

about a person's situation. Listen carefully to what the suffering person says. Do more than hear his words; try also to feel his pain. Only then will you be able to show genuine fellow feeling for your brother or sister.

<sup>9</sup> Compassion will hold us back from spreading harmful gossip about the problems others are facing. A gossip does not build up the congregation; he tears it down. (Prov. 20:19; Rom. 14:19) He is not kind but thoughtless, and his words can injure a person who is already suffering. (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:31, 32) How much better it is when we look for a person's good qualities and think about how we can help him or her deal with trials!

<sup>10</sup> Read Job 6:2, 3. Job, at times, engaged in "wild talk." Still, he later took back some things he had said. (Job 42:6) Like Job, a person today who is enduring a stressful problem may give in to wild talk, saying things that he later regrets. How should we respond? Rather than being critical, we should be compassionate. Remember that Jehovah did not intend for any of us to have the problems and stresses we face today.

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9. What will compassion hold us back from doing, and why?

10. What does the statement at Job 6:2, 3 teach us?



Listen patiently if a fellow believer gives in to “wild talk,”  
and offer comforting words at the right time

(See paragraphs 10-11)

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So it is understandable if a faithful servant of Jehovah speaks thoughtlessly when under great stress. Even if he says inaccurate things about Jehovah or about us, we should not quickly become angry at him or judge him for saying such things. —Prov. 19:11.

<sup>11</sup> At times, a person who is coping with a stressful problem also needs to receive some form of counsel or helpful discipline. (Gal. 6:1) How can el-

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11. How can elders imitate Elihu when giving counsel?

ders handle this challenge? They do well to imitate Elihu, who listened to Job with great empathy. (Job 33:6, 7) Elihu offered his counsel only after he understood Job's thinking. Elders who follow Elihu's example will listen carefully and try to understand the person's situation. Then, when they offer counsel, they are more likely to reach the heart of their listener.

### **SPEAK CONSOLINGLY**

<sup>12</sup> Naomi was a loyal woman who loved Jehovah. But after the death of her husband and two sons, she wanted to change her name from Naomi to "Mara," meaning "Bitter." (Ruth 1:3, 5, 20, ftn., 21) Naomi's daughter-in-law Ruth stuck with her through her trials. Ruth not only provided practical help but also spoke consolingly to Naomi. Ruth expressed her love and support for Naomi in simple, sincere words.—Ruth 1:16, 17.

<sup>13</sup> When a member of our spiritual family loses a marriage mate in death, he or she needs our support. A married couple can be likened to two trees

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12. What effect did the death of her husband and two sons have on Naomi?

13. Why do those who lose a marriage mate in death need our support?

that have grown up next to each other. Over the years, the roots of the trees intertwine. When one tree is uprooted and dies, the other tree can seriously be affected. Similarly, when someone loses a spouse to the enemy death, he or she may feel strong emotions for a long time. Paula,\* whose husband died suddenly, says: “My life was turned upside down, and I felt powerless. I lost my best friend. I talked to my husband about everything. He shared my joys and supported me through difficult times. He provided a shoulder to cry on. I really felt as if I had been cut in half.”

<sup>14</sup> How can we console someone whose marriage mate has died? An important first step is to speak to him or her, even though you may feel awkward or unsure of what to say. Paula, quoted earlier, says: “I understand that death makes people uncomfortable. They worry that what they say might come out wrong. But worse than hearing something awkward is hearing nothing at all.” A grieving person probably does not expect us to say something profound. Paula says: “I appreciated it

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\* Names in this article have been changed.

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**14-15.** How can we console someone whose marriage mate has died?

when friends would simply say, ‘I’m sorry for your loss.’”

<sup>15</sup> William, whose wife died some years ago, relates: “I appreciate it when others recount experiences about my wife; it reassures me that she was loved and respected. This form of support is a tremendous help to me. I feel a deep sense of

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How can we give support to those who have lost a mate?  
(See paragraphs 14-15)



satisfaction, because my wife was so precious to me and had been a big part of my life.” A widow named Bianca explains: “I find comfort when others pray with me and share a scripture or two with me. It helps when they talk about my husband and when they listen to me talk about him.”

<sup>16</sup> Just as Ruth stuck with the widowed Naomi, we need to provide ongoing support for those who lose a loved one in death. Paula, mentioned earlier, says: “Right after my husband died, I got a lot of support. As time passed, people’s lives seemed to go back to normal. However, my life had changed completely. It is a huge help when others realize that a grieving person needs support in the months—even years—following the death.” Of course, each person is different. Some seem to adjust to their new circumstances relatively quickly. For others, however, every activity they once shared with their loved one is a painful reminder of their loss. The ways people grieve vary from person to person. Let us remember that Jehovah gives us the honor and responsibility to care for those

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**16.** (a) What should we provide for someone who has lost a loved one in death? (b) According to James 1:27, what responsibility do we have?

who have lost their mate in death.—Read James 1:27.

<sup>17</sup> Some spouses must deal with the severe anguish and stress that result when their mate abandons them. Joyce, whose husband left her for another woman, says: “The pain of the divorce felt almost worse than if my husband had died. If he had died in an accident or from a sickness, he would have had little choice in the matter. But in this case, my husband chose to abandon me. I felt humiliated and degraded.”

<sup>18</sup> When we do small acts of kindness to those who no longer have a marriage mate, we reassure them of our love. More than ever, they need good friends. (Prov. 17:17) How can you prove that you are their friend? You could invite them over for a simple meal. And you might offer to spend some time with them in recreation or in the field ministry. Another option would be to ask them occasionally to join you for family worship. If you do, you will make Jehovah happy, for he is “close to

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17. Why do those whose mates have abandoned them need our support?

18. What can we do to help those who no longer have a marriage mate?

the brokenhearted” and is “a protector of widows.”  
—Ps. 34:18; 68:5.

<sup>19</sup> Soon, when God’s Kingdom rules the earth, all “distresses will be forgotten.” How we look forward to the time when “the former things will not be called to mind, nor will they come up into the heart.” (Isa. 65:16, 17) Until that day, let us support one another and prove by both our speech and our actions that we love all in our spiritual family.—Read 1 Peter 3:8.

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19. Keeping 1 Peter 3:8 in mind, what are you determined to do?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 44:** A brother is very upset and engages in “wild talk” while an elder listens patiently. Later, after the angry brother has calmed down, the elder provides kind counsel.

**Page 47:** A young married couple spend time with a brother whose wife has recently died. They share pleasant memories of her.

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### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What can we learn from the way that Jehovah helped Lot and Job?
- What does Naomi’s experience teach us?
- How can we give support to those who no longer have a marriage mate?

# Finding Sure Protection From a Satanic Trap



**AS THE ancient Israelites were preparing to cross the Jordan River into the land that God had promised them, some visitors showed up. The visitors were foreign women who invited the men to a feast. It could have seemed like a rare opportunity. Making new friends, dancing, and eating a good meal could be most appealing. Though the customs and morals of those women were not what God’s Law directed to Israel, some Israelite men may have thought: ‘We can handle it. We will be careful.’**

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What happened? The inspired account tells us: “The people started to commit sexual immorality with the daughters of Moab.” Actually, the women wanted those Israelite men to worship false gods. And they did! Understandably, “Jehovah became enraged with Israel.”—Num. 25:1-3.

Those Israelites broke God’s Law in two ways: They bowed down to idols, and they committed sexual immorality. Thousands died for their disobedience. (Ex. 20:4, 5, 14; Deut. 13:6-9) What added to the pain of this tragedy? The timing. Had the men not broken

God's Law, those thousands of Israelites would soon have crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. —Num. 25:5, 9.

Regarding those events, the apostle Paul wrote: "These things happened to them as examples, and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have come." (1 Cor. 10: 7-11) No doubt Satan was delighted that some of those Israelites fell into serious sin and thereby were not qualified to enter the Promised Land. How wise it would be for us to take that warning to heart, knowing that Satan would like nothing better than to prevent us from entering God's new world!

## **A DANGEROUS TRAP**

Satan preys on Christians, using tactics that he knows well and that have worked with many people. As noted earlier with the Israelites, he used immoral sex. In our time, immorality continues to be a dangerous trap. One powerful way that it can overtake us is through pornography.

Today, pornography can often be viewed without others knowing about it. Decades ago, a person who wanted to look at pornography may have had to go to a theater to see inappropriate movies or to adult bookshops to buy pornographic material. The shame

of being seen in or near such places likely kept many away. But now, a person with access to the Internet can look at pornography at work or even in a parked car. And in many lands, a man or woman can access pornography without ever leaving the house.

That is not all. Mobile devices have made it easier to look at pornography. As people walk down the street or ride on buses or trains, they can view immoral images on the screen of a handheld device.

Since it has become easier to view pornography and to hide the fact that a person is doing so, pornography causes harm on a greater scale today than in the past. Countless viewers of pornography damage their marriage, personal dignity, and conscience. Worse still, they risk ruining their friendship with God. You would be right to conclude that pornography harms those who view it. In many cases, it inflicts deep emotional wounds. Those wounds may slowly heal but may leave behind long-lasting scars.

We should be aware, though, that Jehovah offers protection from this satanic trap. If we are to have Jehovah's protection, we must do what the ancient Israelite men failed to do—"strictly obey" him. (Ex. 19:5) We need to recognize that God strongly disapproves of pornography. Why do we say that?

## HATE IT—AS JEHOVAH DOES

Reflect on this: God’s laws to the nation of Israel were unique in the ancient world. Like a wall, they could serve to separate Israel from the surrounding peoples and their vile practices. (Deut. 4:6-8) Those laws made clear a vital truth: Jehovah hates sexual immorality.

In listing the perversions of nearby nations, Jehovah told the Israelites: “You must not do what they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. . . . The land is unclean, and I will bring punishment on it for its error.” To the holy God of Israel, the Canaanites’ lifestyle was so foul that the land they lived in had become unclean, contaminated.—Lev. 18:3, 25.

Although Jehovah punished the Canaanites, other people continued to practice sexual immorality. Over 1,500 years later, Paul described the nations in which Christians lived as “having gone past all moral sense.” In fact, “they gave themselves over to brazen conduct to practice every sort of uncleanness with greediness.” (Eph. 4:17-19) Today, too, many people are brazenly immoral. As far as possible, true worshippers must avoid viewing the immoral activities of those in this world.



Imitate Jesus.  
Vigorously resist  
Satan's attacks!

**“Go  
away,  
Satan!”**

Pornography is an outrage against God. He created humans in his image and likeness and gave us a sense of decency. Wisely, God placed reasonable limits on sex. It was meant to have a healthy and pleasurable role in marriage. (Gen. 1:26-28; Prov. 5: 18, 19) But what are those who produce or promote pornography doing? They are greatly disregarding God's moral standards. Yes, people who promote pornography reproach Jehovah. God will judge those who ignore his standards by their producing or promoting immoral material.—Rom. 1:24-27.

But what about people who intentionally read or view pornography? Some may feel that it is harmless

**TURN IT OFF**

**TURN AWAY**

**REFOCUS**



entertainment. However, they are actually supporting those who disregard Jehovah's standards. This may not have been their intent when they started viewing pornography. Nevertheless, it is evident that worshippers of the true God should strongly hate pornography. The Bible exhorts: "O you who love Jehovah, hate what is bad."—Ps. 97:10.

Even those who want to avoid looking at pornography can find this difficult to do. We are imperfect, and we may have to fight to resist unclean sexual desires. Moreover, our imperfect heart may try to find a way to sidestep God's law. (Jer. 17:9) But many who have become Christians have won this battle.

Knowing this can be of encouragement if you have a similar struggle. Note how God’s Word can help you to avoid Satan’s trap of pornography.

## **DO NOT DWELL ON IMMORAL DESIRES**

As noted earlier, many Israelites let wrong desires lead them to disaster. The same thing can happen today. Jesus’ half brother James described the danger: “Each one is . . . drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin.” (Jas. 1:14, 15) Once an illicit desire grows to a certain point in someone’s heart, it is quite likely that the person will sin. So we must get rid of immoral thoughts, not dwell on them.

If unclean thoughts entice you, take immediate action. Jesus said: “If, then, your hand or your foot makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you. . . . Also, if your eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you.” (Matt. 18:8, 9) Jesus was not suggesting self-mutilation. He was illustrating the need to remove the source of stumbling—quickly and decisively. How can we apply that counsel as respects pornography?

If you come across pornography, do not think, ‘I can handle it.’ *Immediately* look away. Turn off the television *right away*. Shut down the computer or

mobile device *at once*. Refocus on something clean. Doing this can help you control your thinking instead of letting wrong desires control you.

## **WHAT ABOUT MEMORIES OF IMMORAL ENTERTAINMENT?**

What if you have successfully stopped viewing pornography, but the memories of it return from time to time? Pornographic images or thoughts can stay in a person's mind for a long time. They can reappear without warning. If that happens, you may feel an urge to do something unclean, such as give in to masturbation. So be aware that such thoughts may pop up, and be prepared to fight against them.

Strengthen your resolve to submit your thoughts and actions to God's will. Be like the apostle Paul, who was willing to "pummel [his] body and lead it as a slave." (1 Cor. 9:27) Do not let unclean desires enslave you. "Be transformed by making your mind over, so that you may prove to [yourself] the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2) Remember: Thinking and acting in accord with God's will brings far greater satisfaction than obeying sinful impulses.

Try to memorize certain Bible verses. Then when wrong thoughts come into the mind, make yourself

think about those scriptures. Texts such as Psalm 119:37; Isaiah 52:11; Matthew 5:28; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; and 1 Thessalonians 4:4-8 will help you to align your thinking with Jehovah's view of pornography and what he expects of you.

**Thinking and acting in accord with God's will brings far greater satisfaction than obeying sinful impulses**

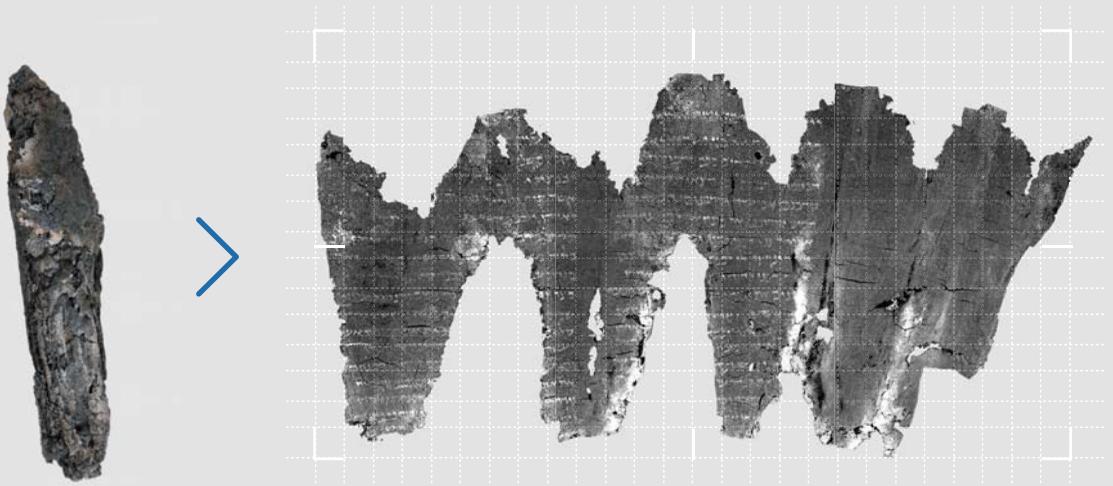
What if on some occasion the desire to view or think about immoral things becomes almost unbearable? Closely follow the steps of our Exemplar, Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:21) After Jesus got baptized, Satan kept tempting him. What did Jesus do? He kept resisting. Using scripture after scripture, he rejected the temptations that Satan presented. He said: "Go away, Satan!" and Satan left him. Just as Jesus never gave up in his fight against the Devil, neither should you. (Matt. 4:1-11) Satan and his world will continue to try to fill your mind with immoral thoughts, but do not give up the fight. The victory over pornography can be won. With Jehovah's help, you can defeat your enemy.

## PRAY TO JEHOVAH, AND OBEY HIM

Lean heavily on Jehovah in prayer. Paul said: “Let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:6, 7) God’s peace brings relief in the struggle against sin. If you draw close to Jehovah, “he will draw close to you.”—Jas. 4:8.

The best protection against any threat is to have the Sovereign of the universe close to you. Jesus said: “The ruler of the world [Satan] is coming, and he has no hold on me.” (John 14:30) Why did Jesus have such confidence? He once explained: “The One who sent me is with me; he did not abandon me to myself, because I always do the things pleasing to him.” (John 8:29) As you do the things that please Jehovah, you too will never be abandoned by him. Avoid the trap of pornography, and Satan will have no lasting hold on you.

# An Ancient Scroll “Unwrapped”



The charred Ein Gedi fragment was unreadable since its discovery in 1970. A 3-D scan has revealed that this scroll contains a portion of Leviticus, including God’s personal name

IN 1970, archaeologists unearthed a charred scroll at Ein Gedi, Israel, near the western shore of the Dead Sea. They found the scroll while excavating a synagogue, which was burned when the village was destroyed, likely in the sixth century C.E. The condition of the scroll had made it illegible; it could not even be unrolled without damaging it. However, thanks to a 3-D scanning technique, the scroll was

“unwrapped.” And with the aid of new digital imaging software, its contents can be read.

What has the scan revealed? The scroll is a Biblical text. What is left of it bears some verses from the opening part of the book of Leviticus. These verses include God’s personal name in Hebrew, using the Tetragrammaton. The find seems to date to between the second half of the first century C.E. and the fourth century C.E., making it the oldest Hebrew Bible scroll to be discovered since the Qumran manuscripts. “Until the virtual unrolling of the Ein Gedi fragment of Leviticus,” writes Gil Zohar in *The Jerusalem Post*, “there had been a millennium-long gap between the 2,000-year-old Dead Sea Scrolls dating from the late Second Temple period and the medieval Aleppo Codex written in the 10th century CE.” According to experts, this scroll that was unwrapped virtually shows that the Masoretic text of the Torah “has been faithfully preserved over the millennia, and that copyists’ mistakes have not crept in.”

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### COVER PICTURE:

Jehovah compassionately sent angels to rescue Lot and his family  
(See study article 26, paragraph 4)

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