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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

SIMPLIFIED EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
DECEMBER 31, 2018–
FEBRUARY 3, 2019

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:
SWEDEN

During summer in Stockholm, it stays bright outside until late, and publishers can witness in the evening. They share their hope for the future with taxi drivers, store clerks, service station attendants, and other night workers

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יהוה



SONGS:
94, 96

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

How can we “buy truth” from Jehovah?

What are five things we may have to give up to learn Bible truth?

How valuable should the truth be to us?

“Buy Truth and Never Sell It”

“Buy truth and never sell it, also wisdom and discipline and understanding.”—PROVERBS 23:23.

WHAT is the most valuable thing in your life? As Jehovah’s people, the most valuable thing we have is our relationship with him. We would never trade it for anything else. We also value the truth from

1, 2. (a) What is the most valuable thing in your life? (b) What truths do we value, and why? (See opening pictures.)

the Bible, because it makes it possible for us to be Jehovah's friends.—Colossians 1:9, 10.

² Jehovah is our Grand Instructor, who teaches us many precious truths in his Word, the Bible. He teaches us the importance of his name and tells us about his wonderful qualities. He tells us that he loves us so much that he gave the life of his dear Son for us. Jehovah teaches us about the Messianic Kingdom. He gives us a hope for the future, whether in heaven for the anointed or in Paradise on earth for the “other sheep.” (John 10:16) Jehovah teaches us how we should live. We view these truths as a treasure because they help us to draw close to our Creator and give us a purpose in life.

³ Jehovah is a generous God. He is so generous that he sacrificed his own Son for us. When Jehovah sees that someone is searching for the truth, he helps that person to find it. He would never ask us to pay money to learn the truth. Once, a man named Simon offered the apostle Peter money for the authority to give holy spirit to others. Peter explained that his thinking was wrong and said: “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could acquire the free gift of God with

3. Does Jehovah ask us to pay money for the truth?

money.” (Acts 8:18-20) So, what does it mean to “buy truth”?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “BUY TRUTH”?

4 Read Proverbs 23:23. It takes effort to learn the truth from the Bible. We have to give up other things for it. And after we “buy truth,” that is, learn the truth, we must be careful that we never “sell it,” that is, leave it. How do we “buy” Bible truth? How much does it cost? The answers to these questions will help us value the truth even more and will make us more determined never to leave it. We will understand why the truth from Jehovah is worth far more than anything else.

5 The fact that something is free does not mean that it does not cost anything. The Hebrew word translated “buy” at Proverbs 23:23 can also mean “acquire.” Both of these words indicate that a person makes an effort or gives something up to get something that he considers valuable. To help us understand how we can buy truth, imagine that a market is offering free bananas. Can we expect that the bananas will just appear on our table? No, we

4. In this article, what will we learn about the truth?

5, 6. (a) How can we buy truth without money? Explain. (b) How does truth benefit us?

still have to go to the market and bring them home. So although the bananas do not cost money, we need to make an effort to get them. In a similar way, we do not need money to learn the truth, but it does require effort and sacrifice.

6 Read Isaiah 55:1-3. What Jehovah said helps us to understand what it means to buy truth. In these verses, Jehovah compares his words of truth to water, milk, and wine. Just as cold water refreshes a thirsty person, the truth refreshes us. And just as milk makes a child grow stronger, Bible truth makes our relationship with Jehovah stronger. Jehovah also compares his words to wine. Why? The Bible says that wine makes people rejoice. (Psalm 104:15) So when Jehovah tells us to “buy wine,” he is letting us know that when we follow his guidance in life, we will be happy. (Psalm 19:8) Jehovah uses these comparisons to help us understand how we benefit when we learn and apply the truth. Now let us discuss five things that we may have to give up to buy truth.

WHAT HAVE YOU GIVEN UP TO BUY TRUTH?

7 **Time.** It takes time for someone to listen to the

7, 8. (a) Why does it take time to learn the truth? (b) What did one student sacrifice, and what was the result?

Kingdom message, read the Bible and Bible literature, study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, prepare for our meetings, and attend them. To do all these things, we must use time that we could have used for other, less important activities. (Read **Ephesians 5:15, 16** and footnote.) How much time does it take to learn basic Bible truths? This is different for each person. There is no limit to what we can learn about Jehovah's wisdom, his ways, and the things he has done. (Romans 11:33) The first issue of the *Watch Tower* compared the truth to "a modest little flower" and said: "Be not content with one flower of truth. Had one been sufficient there would have been no more. Gather ever, seek for more." So we can ask ourselves, 'How much have I learned about Jehovah?' Even if we live forever, there will always be more to learn about Jehovah. Today, though, it is important that we use the time we have to learn as much as we can. Here is an example of someone who did this.

⁸ Mariko,* (see footnote) a young woman from Japan, moved to the United States to go to school in New York City. One day, a pioneer sister shared the good news with her at her home. Mariko already had a religion, but she began to study the Bi-

* Some names in this article have been changed.

ble with the sister. She loved what she was learning so much that she asked to study twice a week. Although Mariko was very busy with school and a part-time job, she began to go to congregation meetings right away. She spent less time on recreation so that she would have more time to learn the truth. By making these sacrifices, Mariko drew closer and closer to Jehovah, and in less than a year, she got baptized. Six months later, in 2006, she became a pioneer, and she is still pioneering today.

⁹ Material things. In order to learn the truth, we may need to give up a well-paid job or a successful career in this system. For example, Peter and Andrew were fishermen, but when Jesus invited them to become his disciples, they left their fishing business. (Matthew 4:18-20) This does not mean that when you learn the truth, you have to leave your job. A person needs to work and take care of his family. (1 Timothy 5:8) But when you learn the truth, the way you think about material things changes. You realize what is really important in life. Jesus said: “Stop storing up for yourselves

9, 10. (a) How does learning the truth change how we feel about material things? (b) What did one young woman give up, and how does she feel about it?

treasures on the earth.” Instead, he encouraged us: “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Matthew 6:19, 20) That is what a young woman named Maria did.

¹⁰ Maria enjoyed playing golf from the time she was a little girl. In high school, she kept getting better and better. She became so good at it that she was given a university scholarship. Maria’s goal in life was to become a professional golfer and make a lot of money. Then she started to study the Bible. She loved what she learned and began to apply it in her life. She said, “The more I adjusted my attitude and lifestyle to the Bible’s standards, the happier I became.” Maria realized that it would be difficult to focus on both her relationship with Jehovah and her sports career. (Matthew 6:24) So she decided to give up her goal of becoming a professional golfer for something better. Today, she is a pioneer and says she has “the happiest, most meaningful life possible.”

¹¹ **Relationships with others.** When we begin to apply what we learn from the Bible, our relationships with friends and family may change. Jesus helped us understand the reason for this when

11. When we learn the truth, what may happen to some of our relationships?

he prayed about his followers: “Sanctify them by means of the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17; footnote) To “sanctify” can mean to “set apart.” When we begin to apply the truth in our life, we are set apart from the world because we follow the standards of the Bible. Even though we try to keep good relationships with our friends and relatives, some may not like us as much as they used to and may even oppose our new beliefs. This does not surprise us. Jesus said: “Indeed, a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” (Matthew 10:36) But Jesus also promised that no matter how much we give up for the truth, we will receive far more in return!—**Read Mark 10:28-30.**

¹² All his life, a Jewish man named Aaron had believed that it was wrong to pronounce God’s name. But he really wanted to know the truth about God. One day, a Witness showed him that if he added vowels to the four Hebrew consonants of God’s name, it could be pronounced “Jehovah.” Aaron was so excited to learn this that he went to the synagogue to tell the rabbis! He thought that they would be happy to learn the truth about God’s name, but they were not. Instead, they spit on him and chased him away. Aaron’s family also turned

12. What did one Jewish man give up for the truth?

against him. But he did not let this stop him from getting to know more about Jehovah. Aaron became one of Jehovah's Witnesses and faithfully served Jehovah for the rest of his life. We can also expect that our relationships with others may change when we learn the truth.

13 Unclean thoughts and actions. When we learn the truth and begin to live by Bible standards, we must be willing to adjust the way we think and act. The apostle Peter wrote: "As obedient children, stop being molded by the desires you formerly had in your ignorance." Then he added: "Become holy yourselves in all your conduct." (1 Peter 1:14, 15) In the ancient city of Corinth, many people were immoral. Those who lived there had to make big changes in order to become clean in Jehovah's eyes. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) Today, many make similar changes when they learn the truth. Peter described this when he wrote: "The time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have done the will of the nations when you carried on in acts of brazen conduct, unbridled passions, overdrinking, wild parties, drinking bouts, and lawless idolatries."—1 Peter 4:3.

13, 14. What changes do we need to make in the way we think and act when we learn the truth? Give an example.

¹⁴ Devynn and Jasmine had been drunkards for many years. Even though Devynn was a skilled bookkeeper, he could not keep a job because of his drinking. Jasmine was well-known for being angry and violent. One day, while she was drunk, she met two Witness missionaries on the road. They offered her a Bible study. But when they went to their home the next week, Jasmine and Devynn were both drunk. They had not believed that the missionaries would care enough to come to their home. The next time the missionaries came, the situation was different. Jasmine and Devynn were eager to start learning Bible truth, and they quickly began to apply what they learned. In less than three months, they stopped drinking, and later they got legally married. Many people in their village noticed how Jasmine and Devynn had changed, and they started studying the Bible too.

¹⁵ **Customs and practices that do not please God.** One of the most difficult changes we have to make is to stop participating in customs and practices that do not please Jehovah. Even after some learn how Jehovah feels about these things, they still find it difficult to stop. They worry about how

15. What can be one of the most difficult changes we have to make for the truth, and why?

their family, workmates, or friends will react. They know that people often have strong feelings about certain customs, such as those that honor dead relatives. (Deuteronomy 14:1) So, what can help us to make the necessary changes? We can learn from the good examples of those in the past who made changes when they learned the truth, such as the early Christians in Ephesus.

¹⁶ In the ancient city of Ephesus, it was very common to practice magic. What did those people who practiced magic do when they became Christians? The Bible explains: “Quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody. And they calculated their value and found them worth 50,000 pieces of silver. Thus in a mighty way, the word of Jehovah kept growing and prevailing.” (Acts 19:19, 20) Those faithful Christians were willing to give up their expensive books, and Jehovah blessed them for this.

¹⁷ What have you sacrificed in order to learn the truth? All of us have given our time. Some of us have sacrificed opportunities to become rich. And

16. What sacrifice did some in Ephesus make?

17. (a) What are some things that we may have given up for the truth? (b) What questions will we answer in the next article?

some of our relationships with others may have changed. Many of us have adjusted the way we think and act and have rejected customs and practices that do not please Jehovah. But we are convinced that Bible truth is far more valuable than anything we have given up. Bible truth makes it possible for us to have a close relationship with Jehovah, which is the most valuable thing in our life. When we think about all the blessings we have because of the truth, it is hard to understand why anyone would ever “sell it”. How could that happen? And how can we avoid making such a serious mistake? We will answer these questions in the next article.

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

To buy truth:

To learn the truth that Jehovah reveals in the Bible and then apply it in our life. This requires us to make sacrifices

To make a sacrifice:

To give up something, such as our time, an activity, or a practice, in order to pursue something more valuable



SONGS:

31, 72

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What could cause a Christian to “sell” the truth?

How can we avoid either drawing away from or drifting away from the truth?

What are three things that can help us become more determined to keep walking in the truth?

“I Will Walk in Your Truth”

“Instruct me, O Jehovah, about your way. I will walk in your truth.”

—PSALM 86:11.

TODAY, it is very common for people to buy something in a store and then return it. And when people buy something online, they are even more likely to return it. Maybe they do not

1-3. (a) How should we feel about Bible truth? Illustrate. (See opening pictures.)
(b) What will we discuss in this article?

like what they bought as much as they thought they would or there is something wrong with it. So they decide either to exchange it for something else or to ask for their money back.

² We would never do this with Bible truth. Once we “buy” it, we never want to “sell” it, that is, once we learn the truth, we never want to leave it. (Read Proverbs 23:23; 1 Timothy 2:4) As we discussed in the previous article, we spent much time to learn the truth. Also, we may have sacrificed a career that made us a lot of money. And we may have had to adjust some of our relationships with others, change the way we think and act, or stop participating in customs and practices that do not please Jehovah. But we are convinced that nothing we gave up is as valuable as the blessings we receive from knowing the truth.

³ Jesus gave an illustration about a traveling merchant who was searching for fine pearls. When the man found one that was very precious, he immediately sold everything he had so that he could buy it. That pearl represented the truth about God’s Kingdom. In this way, Jesus showed how precious the truth would be to those who search for it. (Matthew 13:45, 46) When we first learned the truth, that is, the truth about God’s Kingdom and all the

other precious truths from the Bible, we too were willing to sacrifice anything in order to gain it. If we continue to value the truth, we will never leave it. But sadly, some of God's people have stopped valuing the truth and have even left it. We never want to do that! We need to follow the Bible's advice to "go on walking in the truth." (Read **3 John 2-4.**) That means we put the truth first and show this by the way we live. But why and how might a person "sell," or leave, the truth? How can we make sure that we never do this? And how can we be more determined to "go on walking in the truth"?

WHY AND HOW DO SOME "SELL" THE TRUTH?

⁴ In Jesus' time, some who at first accepted the truth did not continue to walk in it. For example, after Jesus performed a miracle and fed a large crowd, that crowd followed him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. But then Jesus said something that shocked them: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves." Instead of asking Jesus to explain what he meant, they said: "This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?" As a result, "many of his dis-

4. Why did some not continue to walk in the truth in Jesus' time?

ciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him.”—John 6:53-66.

⁵ Sadly, some today have also left the truth. Why? Some were stumbled by an adjusted understanding of a Bible verse or something a well-known brother said or did. Others did not like it when someone gave them counsel from the Bible, or they had a serious disagreement with someone in the congregation. And others followed the false teachings of apostates and others who tell lies about us. These are a few of the reasons that some have willfully drawn away from Jehovah and the congregation. (Hebrews 3:12-14) How much better it would have been if they had trusted in Jesus, as Peter did! When others in the crowd were shocked by Jesus’ words, Jesus asked his apostles if they wanted to leave too. Peter answered: “Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life.”—John 6:67-69.

⁶ Others have drifted away from the truth little by little, perhaps without even noticing what was happening. A person who leaves the truth gradually is like a boat that slowly drifts away from the riverbank. The Bible warns us to be careful so that we

5, 6. (a) Why have some drawn away from the truth in our day?
(b) How could a person drift away from the truth?

“never drift away.” (Hebrews 2:1) Usually a person who drifts away from the truth does not mean to do so. But he lets his friendship with Jehovah become weak, and in time he may lose it. How can we make sure this never happens to us?

HOW CAN WE MAKE SURE WE NEVER SELL THE TRUTH?

⁷ To continue to walk in the truth, we must accept and obey everything Jehovah says. We must make the truth the most important thing in our life and follow Bible principles in everything we do. In prayer, King David promised Jehovah: “I will walk in your truth.” (Psalm 86:11) David was determined to keep walking in the truth, and we must be too. If we are not, we could begin to think about the things we gave up for the truth and might even want some of them back. But we cannot choose which Bible truths to accept and which to ignore. We must walk in “all the truth.” (John 16:13) In the previous article, we discussed five things we may have sacrificed in order to learn and apply the truth. Now we will see how we can make sure that we never return to those things we left behind. —Matthew 6:19.

7. What will help us never to sell the truth?

⁸ Time. To make sure that we never drift away from the truth, we must keep using our time wisely. If we are not careful, we can spend too much time on recreation, hobbies, browsing the Internet, or watching television. Even though these things are not necessarily wrong, we could be using time that we previously used in study and in the ministry. Something like this happened to Emma.* (See footnote.) Ever since she was a little girl, she loved horses and rode them whenever she could. But she began to feel guilty about how much time she was spending on her hobby and decided to change her priorities. Emma also learned from the experience of Cory Wells, a sister who used to ride horses in a rodeo.# (See footnote.) Emma now spends more time serving Jehovah, and she has more time to spend with her family and friends who also serve him. She feels closer to God and is happy to know that she is using her time wisely.

⁹ Material things. To continue to walk in the

* Name has been changed.

Go to JW Broadcasting, and look under INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES > TRUTH TRANSFORMS LIVES.

8. How could the way a Christian uses his time cause him to drift away from the truth? Give an example.

9. How could material things become too important to us?

truth, we cannot let material things become too important to us. When we learned the truth, we realized that serving Jehovah is much more important than material things, and we were happy to give up any of those things for the truth. But as time passes, we may see others buying the latest electronic devices or enjoying other things money can buy. We could start to feel that we are missing out. We might no longer be satisfied with what we have and start to focus more on getting material things than on serving Jehovah. This reminds us of what happened to Demas. He loved “the present system of things” so much that he left the assignment he had with the apostle Paul. (2 Timothy 4:10) Maybe Demas loved material things more than he loved serving God. Or maybe he no longer wanted to make sacrifices in order to serve with Paul. What is the lesson for us? Maybe in the past we really loved material things. If we are not careful, that love can grow in us again and become so strong that we lose our love for the truth.

¹⁰ **Relationships with others.** To keep walking in the truth, we must not allow those who do not serve Jehovah to influence us. When we learned the truth, our relationship with our non-Witness

10. What influence must we resist?

friends and family members changed. Maybe some respected our new beliefs, but others may have opposed them. (1 Peter 4:4) Of course, we try our best to get along with our family members and to be kind to them. But we cannot ignore Jehovah's standards in order to please them. And as we learn from 1 Corinthians 15:33, our close friends should be people who love Jehovah.

¹¹ Unclean thoughts and actions. To walk in the truth, we need to be holy, or clean, from Jehovah's viewpoint. (Isaiah 35:8; read 1 Peter 1:14-16.) When we learned the truth, we made changes in our life in order to follow Bible standards. Some made very big changes. But we still need to be careful that we never exchange our clean life for an immoral life. What can help us to resist any temptation to do something immoral? Think about what Jehovah gave so that we can be holy. He gave the precious life of his dear Son, Jesus Christ! (1 Peter 1:18, 19) To help us to stay clean in Jehovah's eyes, we always need to remember how precious Jesus' ransom sacrifice is.

¹² Customs and practices that do not please

11. How can we avoid unclean thoughts and actions?

12, 13. (a) Why must we view holidays as Jehovah does? (b) What will we discuss next?

God. Family members, workmates, and schoolmates may try to get us to join them in their celebrations. What can help us to resist the pressure to participate in customs and holidays that do not please Jehovah? We need to keep clear in our mind the reasons why Jehovah does not approve of these holidays. We can do research in our publications and remind ourselves of how certain holidays began. When we meditate on the Scriptural reasons we do not celebrate these holidays, we feel sure that we are walking in the way that is “acceptable to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:10) If we trust in Jehovah and his Word, we will not be afraid of what other people think.—Proverbs 29:25.

¹³ We hope to keep walking in the truth forever. What can help us to be even more determined to keep walking in the truth? Here are three things we can do.

BE EVEN MORE DETERMINED TO WALK IN THE TRUTH

¹⁴ First, continue to study the Bible and think deeply about what you learn. Regularly schedule

14. (a) How will continuing to study the Bible help us be determined never to leave the truth? (b) Why do we need wisdom, discipline, and understanding?

The Truth

Learn it. Live it. Teach it.

(See paragraphs 14-16)

time for this. The more you study, the more you will love the truth and be determined never to leave it. Proverbs 23:23 tells us to “buy truth” and also to buy “wisdom and discipline and understanding.” It is not enough just to know Bible truth. We need to apply it in our life. When we gain understanding, we put together the things we learn with the things we already know. Wisdom moves us to act on what we know. Sometimes the truth disciplines us by showing us what changes we need to make. We need to be quick to respond to such discipline, which the Bible says is more precious than silver.—Proverbs 8:10.

¹⁵ Second, be determined to apply the truth in

15. How does the truth protect us like a belt?

your everyday life. The Bible compares the truth to the belt of a soldier. (Ephesians 6:14) In Bible times, a belt gave a soldier support and protection in battle as long as it was tight. If it was loose, it would not help him. How does the truth protect us like a belt? If we keep Bible truth close to us all the time, it will protect us from thinking in a wrong way and will help us to make good decisions. When we have a serious problem or are tempted to do something wrong, Bible truth will make us even more determined to do what is right. Just as a soldier would never go into battle without his belt, we would never leave the truth. We make sure we apply Bible truth in every part of our life. A soldier would also carry his sword on his belt. Let us see how we can do something similar.

¹⁶ Third, teach Bible truth to others as much as you can. The Bible is compared to a sword. Just as a good soldier kept a tight grip on his sword, we need to keep a tight grip on God's Word. (Ephesians 6:17) We all can become better teachers, "handling the word of the truth aright." (2 Timothy 2:15) When we use the Bible to teach others, we come to

16. How does teaching the truth help us to keep walking in the truth?

know and love the truth even more. And we become even more determined to keep walking in the truth.

¹⁷ The truth is a precious gift from Jehovah. It makes it possible for us to have a close relationship with our heavenly Father. That is the most valuable thing we could have. Jehovah has already taught us so much, but it is only the beginning! He promises to keep teaching us forever. So treasure the truth as you would treasure a valuable pearl. Continue to “buy truth and never sell it.” Then, like David, you will keep this promise to Jehovah: “I will walk in your truth.”—Psalm 86:11.

17. Why is the truth precious to you?

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

To walk in the truth:

To keep learning more about the truth from the Bible and to keep applying it in our life. We serve Jehovah and obey everything he says

To sell the truth:

To stop valuing the truth that we learned. This will harm our relationship with Jehovah. In time, we may even leave the truth



SONGS:
3, 8

**DO YOU
REMEMBER?**

Why can we
tell Jehovah
our concerns?

What should
we pray about?

Why is it so
important to
wait for Jehovah
to act?

Trust in Jehovah and Live!

“Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding.”—PROVERBS 3:5.

WE ALL need comfort. Perhaps our lives have become full of worries, disappointments, and anxieties. We may be suffering because we have an illness, because we are getting older, or because someone we love has died. Some of us are being treated

1. Why do we all need comfort?

badly by others. Additionally, people around us are becoming more and more violent. True, these “critical times” prove that we are living “in the last days” and that each day we are getting closer to the new world. (2 Timothy 3:1) Still, maybe we have waited a long time for Jehovah’s promises to come true, and we may be experiencing more and more difficulties. So where can we find comfort?

² Let us examine the book of Habakkuk to find the answer to that question. Even though the Scriptures do not give us many details about Habakkuk’s life, his book is truly encouraging. The name Habakkuk probably means “Ardent Embrace.” This could refer to Jehovah’s warm embrace that comforts his worshippers. Or it could also refer to the way that his worshippers tightly hold on to Jehovah. Habakkuk spoke to God and asked him some questions. Jehovah inspired Habakkuk to write down the conversation because He knew that we would benefit from it.—Habakkuk 2:2.

³ This conversation between the distressed prophet and Jehovah is all that the Bible tells

2, 3. (a) What do we know about Habakkuk? (b) Why will we examine the book of Habakkuk?

us about Habakkuk. But his book is part of “all the things that were written beforehand” in God’s Word, “so that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4) How can the book of Habakkuk help each one of us? It can help us to see what it means to trust in Jehovah. And Habakkuk’s prophecy assures us that we can have peace of mind no matter what problems or trials we have.

PRAY TO JEHOVAH

4 Read Habakkuk 1:2, 3. Habakkuk lived in a very difficult time. The people around him were wicked and violent, and this made him extremely sad. Everywhere he looked, he saw the Israelites treating one another cruelly and unfairly. Habakkuk wondered: ‘When is this wickedness going to end? Why is Jehovah taking so long to do something about it?’ He felt helpless. So he begged Jehovah to do something. Habakkuk may have started to think that Jehovah no longer cared about His people or that He would not act. Have you ever felt the same way?

4. Why was Habakkuk distressed?

⁵ Did Habakkuk ask these questions because he had stopped trusting in Jehovah and his promises? Not at all! Habakkuk was asking Jehovah for help with his doubts and problems, which shows that he had not given up hope but still trusted in Him. Habakkuk was clearly worried and confused. He did not understand why Jehovah was waiting to act and why He was allowing him to suffer so much. The fact that Jehovah inspired Habakkuk to write down his concerns teaches us an important lesson. We must not be afraid to tell Jehovah our concerns or doubts. Actually, he kindly invites us to pray and to tell him exactly how we feel. (Psalm 50:15; 62:8) Proverbs 3:5 encourages all of us: “Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding.” Habakkuk applied these words in his life.

⁶ Habakkuk trusted in Jehovah, his Friend and Father, and took the initiative to draw close to him. Habakkuk did not just worry about his situation and try to fix it on his own. Rather, he prayed about his feelings and worries. This is a good example for us. Jehovah, who is the Hearer of prayer,

5. What can we learn from the book of Habakkuk? (See opening picture.)

6. Why is it important to pray?

invites us to show that we trust in him by praying and telling him our concerns. (Psalm 65:2) When we do this, we will see how Jehovah answers our prayers. We will feel his warm embrace when he comforts and guides us. (Psalm 73:23, 24) He will help us to understand how he views our situation, no matter what trials we suffer. Praying to Jehovah is truly one of the best ways that we show we trust in him.

LISTEN TO JEHOVAH

⁷ Read Habakkuk 1:5-7. After Habakkuk told Jehovah about his worries, he may have wondered how Jehovah would react. As a loving Father, Jehovah understood how Habakkuk felt. He knew that Habakkuk was suffering and begging for help. So Jehovah did not rebuke Habakkuk but told him what He would soon do to the unfaithful Jews. In fact, Habakkuk may have been the first person whom Jehovah told that their punishment would be very soon.

⁸ Jehovah explained to Habakkuk that He was ready to act. He would punish the violent and wick-

7. How did Jehovah react when Habakkuk told Him about his concerns?

8. Why was Jehovah's answer not what Habakkuk expected?

ed people of Judah. By saying that this would happen “in your days,” Jehovah showed that this judgment would come while Habakkuk or the Israelites around him were still alive. Jehovah’s answer was not at all what Habakkuk expected. The Chaldeans, or Babylonians, were brutal. They were more violent than the Israelites, who at least knew Jehovah’s standards. So why would Jehovah use this cruel pagan nation to punish his people? This would only cause more suffering for Judah.* (See footnote.) How would you have felt if you were Habakkuk?

⁹ Read Habakkuk 1:12-14, 17. Even though Habakkuk understood that Jehovah was going to use the Babylonians to punish the wicked people around him, he was still confused. But he was humble and was determined to continue trusting in Jehovah. In fact, he said that Jehovah continued to be his “Rock.” (Deuteronomy 32:4; Isaiah 26:4) Habakkuk was convinced that God is loving and kind, so he was not afraid to ask Jehovah some more questions, such as: Why would Jehovah allow

* Habakkuk 1:5 uses “you” in plural, showing that the destruction would affect all the people of Judah.

9. What other questions did Habakkuk ask?

things in Judah to get even worse and his people to suffer even more? Why would he not do something right away? Why would the Almighty “keep silent” and tolerate wickedness everywhere? After all, Jehovah is the “Holy One,” and his “eyes are too pure to look on what is evil.”

¹⁰ Sometimes we may feel just like Habakkuk. We listen to Jehovah. We trust in him and read and study his Word, which strengthens our hope. We also hear about his promises when we listen to what his organization teaches us. But we may still wonder, ‘When will our suffering end?’ We can learn from what Habakkuk did next.

WAIT FOR JEHOVAH TO ACT

¹¹ **Read Habakkuk 2:1.** Habakkuk’s conversation with Jehovah gave him peace of mind. It made him determined to wait for Jehovah to act. Habakkuk repeated his determination when he said: “I quietly wait for the day of distress.” (Habakkuk 3:16) Other faithful servants of God also kept waiting patiently for Jehovah to act. Their example encourages us because it proves that we can do the same.—Micah 7:7; James 5:7, 8.

10. Why may we sometimes feel just like Habakkuk?

11. What was Habakkuk determined to do?

¹² What can we learn from Habakkuk's determination? First, we must never stop praying to Jehovah no matter what problems we have. Second, we need to listen to what Jehovah tells us by means of his Word and his organization. And third, we should wait patiently for Jehovah to act and trust that he will relieve our pain in his own time. If we imitate Habakkuk, we will have peace of mind and be able to endure. Our hope will help us to be patient and happy no matter what problems we have. We are confident that our heavenly Father will act. —Romans 12:12.

¹³ **Read Habakkuk 2:3.** We can be sure Jehovah was pleased that Habakkuk decided to wait for Him to act. The Almighty knew exactly what Habakkuk was suffering, so He comforted the prophet and lovingly assured him that He would answer his sincere questions. Habakkuk would soon get relief from all his worries. It was as if Jehovah told Habakkuk: "Just be patient and trust in me. I will answer your prayer, even if it seems to take a long time." Jehovah reminded Habakkuk that He had already decided when He would fulfill His promises.

12. What can we learn from Habakkuk?

13. How did Jehovah comfort Habakkuk?

So he encouraged Habakkuk to keep waiting. In the end, the prophet would not be disappointed.

¹⁴ We too need to wait for Jehovah to act. We also need to listen carefully to what he tells us. Then we will have confidence and peace of mind no matter what trials we suffer. Jesus encouraged us not to focus on “the times or seasons” that God has not told us about. (Acts 1:7) We need to trust that Jehovah knows the best time to act. Therefore, we should not give up but should be humble and patient and have faith in God. And while we wait, we should use our time wisely and serve Jehovah as best we can.—Mark 13:35-37; Galatians 6:9.

JEHOVAH GIVES LIFE TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM

¹⁵ Jehovah promised: “The righteous one will live by his faithfulness,” and “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah.” (Habakkuk 2:4, 14) Yes, Jehovah promises to give eternal life to those who are patient and trust in him.

14. What should we be determined to do when we suffer trials?

15, 16. (a) What promises can we find in the book of Habakkuk?

(b) What do these promises teach us?



Why are we determined to do our best for Jehovah?
(See paragraph 14)

¹⁶ That promise found at Habakkuk 2:4 is so important that the apostle Paul quoted it three times in his letters! (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38) We can be sure that no matter what difficulties we suffer, we will see Jehovah's promises come true if we trust in him. Jehovah wants us to focus on our hope for the future.

¹⁷ The book of Habakkuk has a powerful lesson for all of us who are living in the last days. Jehovah

17. What does Jehovah assure us he will do for us if we trust in him?

promises eternal life to any righteous person who trusts in him. So let us continue to strengthen our trust in God, no matter what problems and worries we have. What Jehovah said to Habakkuk assures us that He will support us and save us. He kindly asks us to trust in him and to wait patiently for the time that he has already set for his Kingdom to rule the earth. At that time, the earth will be filled with happy and peaceful people who worship Jehovah. —Matthew 5:5; Hebrews 10:36-39.

TRUST IN JEHOVAH AND BE JOYFUL

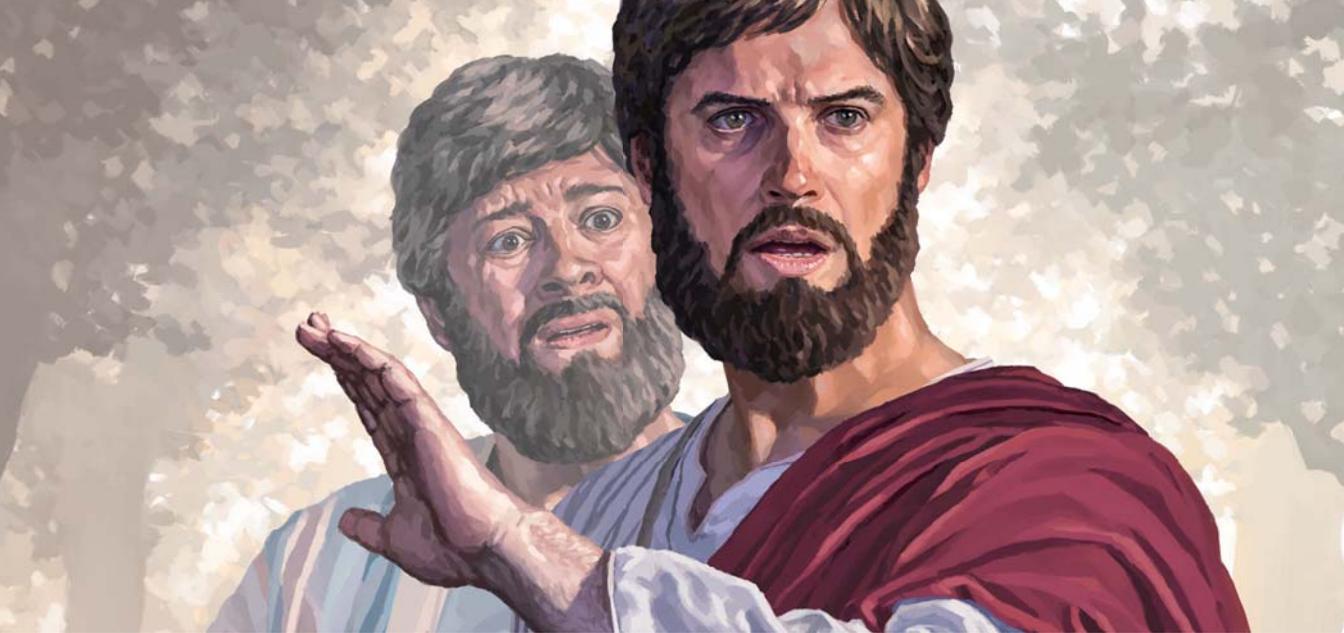
¹⁸ **Read Habakkuk 3:16-19.** What Jehovah told Habakkuk affected him greatly. Habakkuk meditated on the amazing things that Jehovah had done for His people in the past. Now his trust in Jehovah was strengthened. He was sure Jehovah would act soon! That comforted the prophet, even though he knew that he might still suffer for some time. Habakkuk no longer had doubts. Rather, he had complete faith that Jehovah would save him. In fact, what he says in verse 18 may be one of the greatest expressions of trust we read in the Bible. Some scholars believe that it means: “I will jump for joy in the Lord; I will spin round for delight in God.”

18. How did Jehovah’s words affect Habakkuk?

What a powerful lesson for all of us! Jehovah has not only given us wonderful promises for the future, but he has also assured us that very soon he will fulfill those promises.

¹⁹ The vital lesson we learn from the book of Habakkuk is to trust in Jehovah. (Habakkuk 2:4) To keep trusting in Jehovah, we need to strengthen our relationship with him. So here is what we must do. (1) Keep praying, telling Jehovah about all our worries and concerns. (2) Listen carefully to what Jehovah tells us in his Word, and follow the direction he gives us through his organization. (3) Be faithful and patient while we wait for Jehovah to fulfill his promises. That is what Habakkuk did. Even though he was very distressed when he began his conversation with Jehovah, in the end he was encouraged and joyful! If we imitate Habakkuk, we too will be comforted by the warm embrace of our heavenly Father, Jehovah. What greater comfort could we get in this wicked world?

19. How can we be comforted by Jehovah, as Habakkuk was?



SONGS:
88, 45

CAN YOU ANSWER?

Why is Jehovah's thinking beneficial for us?

Why is Jehovah's thinking superior to the ideas and values of the world?

What must we do to avoid being molded by the world?

Who Molds Your Thinking?

“Stop being molded by this system of things.”—ROMANS 12:2.

JESUS' disciples were shocked! They thought that Jesus would restore the kingdom of Israel, but Jesus said that he would soon suffer and die. The apostle Peter

1, 2. (a) How did Jesus respond when Peter told him to be kind to himself? (See opening picture.) (b) Why did Jesus respond in that way?

spoke first: “Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this happen to you at all.” Jesus replied: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God’s thoughts, but those of men.”—Matthew 16:21-23; Acts 1:6.

² By saying that, Jesus made it clear that Jehovah’s thinking is different from the ideas of this world controlled by Satan. (1 John 5:19) Peter encouraged Jesus to have the selfish attitude that many people in the world have. But Jesus knew that Jehovah wanted him to prepare himself for the suffering and death that he would soon experience. Jesus’ answer clearly showed that he accepted Jehovah’s thinking and completely rejected the world’s.

³ What about us? Do we think like Jehovah or like people in the world? As Christians, we work hard to make sure that what we do pleases God. But what about the way we think? Are we working hard to think like Jehovah, that is, to view matters as he views them? Doing so takes a lot of effort. However, it is very easy to think like people in the world. That is because the spirit of the world is all around us.

3. Why is it difficult to accept Jehovah’s thinking and reject the world’s?

(Ephesians 2:2) Also, people in the world often focus on themselves, and we may be tempted to think like them. Yes, it is difficult to think like Jehovah but very easy to think like people in the world.

⁴ If we let the world influence our thinking, we will likely become selfish and want to decide for ourselves what is right and what is wrong. (Mark 7:21, 22) So it is vital that we learn to think “God’s thoughts,” not “those of men.” This article will help us to do that. We will consider reasons why viewing matters as Jehovah does is not too restrictive but is beneficial. We will also consider how we can avoid being molded, or influenced, by the thinking of this world. In the next article, we will learn how we can get Jehovah’s thinking about certain matters and make his thinking our own.

JEHOVAH’S THINKING IS BENEFICIAL

⁵ Some people do not want anyone to influence the way they think. They say, “I think for myself.” They probably mean that they want to make their own decisions and that they have the right to do so. They do not want others to control them or to

4. (a) What will happen if we let the world influence our thinking?
(b) What will we learn in this article?

5. Why do some people not want anyone to influence them?

force them to be just like everyone else.* (See footnote.)

⁶ It is good to know that if we accept Jehovah's thinking, we can still have our own opinions. Second Corinthians 3:17 says: "Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom." Jehovah gives us the freedom to become the type of person we want to be. We can have our personal preferences and choose which things to be interested in. Jehovah made us this way. But this does not mean that we have unlimited freedom. (Read 1 Peter 2:16.) When we need to know what is right or wrong, Jehovah wants us to use his Word as our guide. Is this too restrictive, or is it beneficial?

⁷ We can illustrate it this way. Parents try to teach their children good values. They may teach them to be honest, to work hard, and to care about others. This is not too restrictive. Rather, parents are preparing their children to be successful in life. When

* The truth is that even the most independent people are influenced by others. For example, whether we are thinking about how life began or simply about what to wear, others influence us, at least a little. But we can choose whom we allow to influence us.

6. (a) What freedom does Jehovah give us? (b) Is this freedom unlimited?

7, 8. Is it too restrictive to view matters the way Jehovah wants us to? Give an example.

the children grow up and leave home, they will be free to make their own choices. If they choose to live according to the good values their parents taught them, they are more likely to make good decisions and avoid many problems, anxieties, and regrets.

⁸ Like a good parent, Jehovah wants his children to have the most satisfying life possible. (Isaiah 48: 17, 18) So he teaches us basic principles about moral conduct and how we should treat others. He invites us to learn to view matters the way he does and to live according to his values. This is not too restrictive. Instead, it makes us wiser and helps us make better decisions. (Psalm 92:5; Proverbs 2:1-5; Isaiah 55:9) We can still have our personal preferences, but we will make choices that will make us happy. (Psalm 1:2, 3) When we have Jehovah's thinking, we benefit in many ways!

JEHOVAH'S THINKING IS SUPERIOR

⁹ Another reason why we want our thinking to be more like Jehovah's is that his thinking is far superior to the world's. The world gives advice about what conduct is moral, how to have a happy family, and how to succeed in our career and other areas of

9, 10. What proves that Jehovah's thinking is superior to the world's?

life. But most of this advice does not agree with Jehovah's thinking. For example, the world often encourages people to pursue only their own interests and to view sexual immorality as acceptable. And it sometimes suggests that married couples would be happier if they separate or get divorced for minor reasons. This advice goes against what the Bible teaches. But is the world's advice more practical today than the Bible's advice?

¹⁰ Jesus said: "Wisdom is proved righteous by its works." (Matthew 11:19) Although the world has made much progress in technology, it has not been able to solve the major problems that prevent us from being happy, such as war, racism, and crime. In addition, the world views sexual immorality as acceptable. But many people admit that this destroys families, causes health problems, and has other bad consequences. What about Jehovah's advice? Christians who have accepted Jehovah's viewpoint have happier families, are healthier, and have peaceful relationships with their brothers and sisters around the world. (Isaiah 2:4; Acts 10:34, 35; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) This clearly proves that Jehovah's thinking is superior to the world's.

¹¹ Jehovah's faithful servants in the past knew that

11. Who molded Moses' thinking, and what was the result?

Jehovah's thinking is superior. For example, even though Moses was taught "all the wisdom of the Egyptians," he knew that true wisdom comes from Jehovah. (Acts 7:22; Psalm 90:12) So he asked Jehovah: "Make me know your ways." (Exodus 33:13) Because Moses let Jehovah mold his thinking, Jehovah used him in an amazing way to accomplish His purpose and gave honor to Moses by calling him a man of great faith.—Hebrews 11:24-27.

¹² The apostle Paul was an intelligent, well-educated man, and he spoke at least two languages. (Acts 5:34; 21:37, 39; 22:2, 3) But he rejected worldly wisdom and made his decisions based on God's Word. (Read Acts 17:2; 1 Corinthians 2:6, 7, 13.) As a result, he had a very successful ministry and looked forward to a reward that would last forever.—2 Timothy 4:8.

¹³ Clearly, God's thinking is far superior to the world's. If we follow God's standards, we will be truly happy and successful. But Jehovah will not force us to think like him. "The faithful and discreet slave" does not control our thoughts, and neither do the elders. (Matthew 24:45; 2 Corinthians 1:24) Each of us

12. What did Paul base his decisions on?

13. Who is responsible for adjusting our thinking so that we view things the way Jehovah does?

is responsible for adjusting our own thinking so that we view things the way Jehovah does. How can we do that?

AVOID BEING MOLDED BY THIS WORLD

¹⁴ Romans 12:2 says: “Stop being molded by this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, so that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” This scripture teaches us that no matter what molded our thinking before we learned the truth, we can change our thoughts and make them more like God’s. Although genetic factors and our experiences in life have influenced the way we think to some degree, our mind can keep changing. And it will change based mostly on what we choose to think about. If we meditate on Jehovah’s thinking, we will prove to ourselves that his viewpoint is always right. Then, we will desire to view matters the way he views them.

¹⁵ But to make our mind over so that we think like Jehovah, we must “stop being molded by this system.” This means that we must stop watching, reading, and listening to anything that goes against

14, 15. (a) What must we meditate on so that we think like Jehovah? (b) Why must we not allow worldly ideas to enter our minds? Give an example.

God's thinking. To help us understand how important this is, consider the example of food. Someone who wants to be healthier may decide to eat better foods. But all his efforts will be useless if he also regularly eats rotten food! In a similar way, all our efforts to learn about Jehovah's thinking will be useless if we allow worldly ideas to enter our minds.

¹⁶ Can we completely avoid worldly ideas? No, we will be exposed to some of the world's ideas because we cannot literally get out of the world. (1 Corinthians 5:9, 10) Even when we are preaching, we will hear people express wrong ideas and false beliefs. But while we cannot completely avoid wrong ideas, we do not have to keep thinking about them or accept them. Like Jesus, we should be quick to reject thoughts that Satan would like us to have. And we can protect ourselves by avoiding unnecessary exposure to the world's thinking.—Read Proverbs 4:23.

¹⁷ For example, we should choose our friends carefully. The Bible warns that if we become close friends with people who do not worship Jehovah, we will start to think the way they do. (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:12, 32, 33) We should also choose our

16. What must we protect ourselves from?

17. How can we avoid unnecessary exposure to the world's thinking?



Do we help our children to reject harmful entertainment?
(See paragraphs 18, 19)

entertainment carefully. When we reject entertainment that promotes the theory of evolution, violence, or immorality, we avoid poisoning our mind with ideas that are “against the knowledge of God.” —2 Corinthians 10:5.

¹⁸ We must also recognize and reject worldly ideas that are promoted in less obvious ways. For example, some news reports are presented in a way that

18, 19. (a) Why must we be careful of worldly ideas that are promoted in less obvious ways? (b) What questions should we ask ourselves, and why?

favors certain political opinions. And some news stories promote goals and accomplishments that the world admires. Some movies and books promote the “me first” and “family first” ways of thinking and make them seem reasonable, appealing, even right. However, these viewpoints ignore the Bible. It says that we and our family will be truly happy when we love Jehovah above all. (Matthew 22:36-39) Also, some children’s stories, although they may be mostly acceptable, can subtly cause children to accept immoral behavior.

¹⁹ This does not mean that it is wrong to enjoy wholesome entertainment. But we should ask ourselves: ‘Do I recognize worldly ideas even when they are promoted indirectly? Am I protecting my children and myself from certain TV programs and reading material? Do I help my children to have Jehovah’s view of matters so that they are not influenced by the worldly ideas they hear and see?’ If we recognize the difference between God’s thinking and the world’s, we can avoid “being molded by this system of things.”

WHO IS MOLDING YOU NOW?

²⁰ We must remember that there are only two

20. What will determine who molds us?

sources of information. One is Jehovah, and the other is Satan and his world. Who molds you? The answer is, the one you get information from. If we accept the world's ideas, the world will mold our thinking and we will think and act selfishly. So it is very important that we carefully choose what we watch, read, listen to, and think about.

²¹ In this article we have learned that to have Jehovah's thinking, we must avoid worldly ideas. We must also meditate on God's thoughts so that we will think more like him. In the next article, we will learn how to do that.

21. What will we discuss in the next article?

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

We have **Jehovah's thinking** when we view matters the way he does. We value what he values and hate what he hates. To think like Jehovah, we must reject worldly ideas that go against God's principles



SONGS:
56, 123

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

How do Bible study and meditation help us to make Jehovah's thoughts our own?

What effect should Jehovah's thinking have on our actions?

How can meditating on God's thoughts help us to make wise decisions?

Are You Making Jehovah's Thoughts Your Own?

"Be transformed by making your mind over."

—ROMANS 12:2.

IMAGINE that someone gives a gift to a small child. The child's parents tell him, "Say thank you." He does so, mainly because they told him to do it. But as the child gets older, he begins to understand why his par-

1, 2. As we continue to make progress, what do we learn? Give an example.

ents think that it is important to be grateful when others do kind things. Eventually, he is motivated to thank others on his own because he has learned to be grateful.

² Something similar happened to us. When we started to learn the truth, we learned that it is important to obey Jehovah's basic commands. But as we continue to make progress, we learn more about his thinking, that is, what he likes, what he does not like, and how he views matters. When we let Jehovah's thinking influence our personal choices and our actions, we make his thoughts our own.

³ Even though we enjoy learning to think like Jehovah, it is sometimes difficult to think the way he does because we are imperfect. For example, we know how Jehovah views moral cleanness, materialism, the preaching work, the misuse of blood, and other things. But it might be difficult for us to understand why he views them the way he does. So how can we learn to think more like Jehovah? And how will this help us to do the right thing now and in the future?

3. Why can it be difficult to think the way Jehovah does?

HOW WE MAKE GOD'S THOUGHTS OUR OWN

4 Read Romans 12:2. In this verse, the apostle Paul described what we need to do to learn to think the way Jehovah does. He said that we must “stop being molded by this system of things.” As we learned in the previous article, this means that we must reject the world’s ideas and attitudes. But Paul also said that we need to make our mind over. This means that we have to study God’s Word, understand his thoughts, meditate on them, and work hard to have God’s thinking.

5 Study is more than quickly reading information or underlining the answers to study questions. When we study, we think about what the material teaches us about who Jehovah is, what he does, and how he thinks. We try to understand why Jehovah tells us to do one thing and to avoid something else. We also consider what we need to change in our life and in our thinking. Of course, it might not be possible to meditate on all these points every time we study. But it is good to spend time, perhaps half of each study period, meditat-

4. What does it mean to make our mind over?

5. Explain the difference between reading and study.

ing on what we have read.—Psalm 119:97; 1 Timothy 4:15.

⁶ Something amazing happens when we regularly meditate on God’s Word. We ‘prove to ourselves,’ or convince ourselves, that Jehovah’s thinking is perfect. We begin to understand the way he views matters, and we eventually agree with his viewpoint. So we make our mind over and start thinking in a new way. Gradually, we make Jehovah’s thoughts our own.

OUR THOUGHTS AFFECT OUR ACTIONS

⁷ Our thoughts affect our actions. (Mark 7:21-23; James 2:17) Let us consider a few examples that make this point clear. One example, found in the account about Jesus’ birth, clearly shows Jehovah’s thinking about material things. God personally chose Joseph and Mary to raise his Son even though they did not have a lot of money. (Leviticus 12:8; Luke 2:24) When Jesus was born, Mary “laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the lodging place.” (Luke 2:7) If

6. What happens when we meditate on God’s Word?

7, 8. (a) How does Jehovah view material things? (See opening pictures.) (b) If we view material things as Jehovah does, what will always be most important to us?

Jehovah had wanted to, he could have made sure that Jesus was born in a much better place. But he wanted Jesus to be raised in a family that put worship to God first. That was the most important thing to Jehovah.

⁸ This account about Jesus' birth teaches us how Jehovah views material things. Some parents want their children to have the best material things, even if that causes their children's relationship with Jehovah to suffer. But clearly, Jehovah views our relationship with him as the most important thing. Have you accepted Jehovah's view of this matter? What do your actions show?—Read Hebrews 13:5.

⁹ Another example is how Jehovah views a person who stumbles others, that is, causes others to sin or to stop serving Jehovah. Jesus said: "Whoever stumbles one of these little ones who have faith, it would be better for him if a millstone that is turned by a donkey were put around his neck and he were pitched into the sea." (Mark 9:42) These are very strong words! And we know that Jesus is just like his Father. So we can be sure that Jehovah

9, 10. How might we show that we view stumbling others the same way that Jehovah does?

is very displeased when someone stumbles one of Jesus' followers.—John 14:9.

¹⁰ Do we view stumbling others the same way that Jehovah and Jesus do? What do our actions show? For example, we may like a certain style of dress and grooming. But what will we do if our choice may upset some in the congregation or cause others to have immoral thoughts? Will our love for our brothers motivate us to give up our preferences?—1 Timothy 2:9, 10.

¹¹ Here is a third example: Jehovah hates unrighteousness. (Isaiah 61:8) Of course, he knows that sometimes it is difficult for us to do what is right, because we are imperfect. Still, he wants us to hate what is bad, just as he does. (Read Psalm 97:10.) If we meditate on why Jehovah hates bad things, it will help us to make his view our own and will give us the strength to resist doing bad things.

¹² If we learn to hate what is bad, it will also help us to realize that certain things are wrong, even though the Bible does not specifically talk about them. For example, a form of immoral conduct called lap dancing is becoming more common in

11, 12. How will we protect ourselves if we learn to hate what Jehovah hates and develop self-control?

the world today. Some people feel that it is not the same as having sex with someone, so they think that it is not bad.* (See footnote.) But is that really how Jehovah feels about it? Remember, Jehovah hates every kind of badness. So let us stay far away from anything that is bad by learning to develop self-control and by hating what Jehovah hates. —Romans 12:9.

THINK NOW ABOUT WHAT YOU WILL DO IN THE FUTURE

13 When we study, we should think about how Jehovah views matters because this can help us make wise decisions. Then, if we are ever in a situation where we need to make an immediate decision, we will not be totally surprised. (Proverbs 22:3) Let us consider some examples from the Bible.

14 When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph,

* Lap dancing is an activity during which a performer who may be partially naked makes sexual movements while sitting on the lap of a customer. Depending on the facts of the situation, this could be considered sexual immorality and require that the elders form a judicial committee. A Christian who has been involved in this should ask the elders for help.—James 5:14, 15.

13. Why should we think about how Jehovah views matters now so that we can make wise decisions in the future?

14. What do we learn from Joseph's answer to Potiphar's wife?

he immediately rejected her. Obviously, Joseph had meditated on how Jehovah views marriage. (Read Genesis 39:8, 9.) Joseph told Potiphar's wife: "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?" This shows that he had made God's view his own. What about us? What would you do if a coworker started to flirt with you? Or what if someone sent a sexually explicit message or image to your mobile phone?* (See footnote.) It is much easier to stay loyal to Jehovah if we have already learned about and accepted his view on such matters and have already decided what we will do.

15 Consider also the example of the three Hebrews known as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When

* Using a mobile phone to send sexually explicit messages, photos, or videos is called sexting. Depending on the facts, it may require that the elders form a judicial committee. In some cases, government authorities have even charged teenagers as sex offenders because they were involved in sexting. For more information, go to the jw.org website and read the online article "Young People Ask—What Should I Know About Sexting?" (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS.) Or see the article "How to Talk to Your Teen About Sexting" in the *Awake!* issue of November 2013, pages 4-5.

15. How can we remain faithful to Jehovah, as the three Hebrews did?



King Nebuchadnezzar commanded them to worship the golden image he had made, they firmly refused. Their clear answer to the king showed that they had already thought about what would happen if they remained faithful to Jehovah. (Exodus 20:4, 5; Daniel 3:4-6, 12, 16-18) What about today? What would you do if your boss asked you to donate money for a celebration connected with false religion? Instead of waiting until something like this happens, it would be good for us to meditate now on how Jehovah views such things. Then, if we are ever in such a situation, it will be easier for us to do and say the right thing, as the three Hebrews did.



Did you do research, complete a legal medical document, and speak with your doctor?

(See paragraph 16)

¹⁶ Meditating on Jehovah’s thinking can also help us to remain loyal to him if we have a medical emergency. Of course, we are determined to refuse a transfusion of whole blood or any of its four major components. (Acts 15:28, 29) But there are some procedures involving blood that require each Christian to make his own personal decision based on Bible principles. When is the best time to decide what to do? Is it when we are in the hospital, maybe in pain and under pressure to make a quick decision? Certainly not. Now is the time to do research, complete a legal medical document that

16. How can clearly understanding Jehovah’s thinking help us to prepare for a medical emergency?

clearly explains what we want, and speak with our doctor.* (See footnote.)

¹⁷ Finally, think about Jesus' quick response to Peter's unwise advice: "Be kind to yourself, Lord." Jesus had obviously meditated a lot on what God wanted him to do and on the prophecies about his life and death on earth. This knowledge gave him the strength to remain faithful to Jehovah and to give his life as a sacrifice for us all.—Read **Matthew 16:21-23**.

¹⁸ Today, God wants us to be his friends and to do our best to preach the good news. (Matthew 6: 33; 28:19, 20; James 4:8) But some people with good intentions may try to discourage us, as Peter did to Jesus. For example, your boss may offer you more money but you know that you would have to work more hours and would not have as much time to attend meetings or preach with the congregation. Or if you are in school, suppose your teachers offer you the opportunity to move away from home to receive additional education. If that hap-

* For more information about Bible principles that can help you, see, for example, the book *How to Remain in God's Love*, pages 246-249.

17-19. Why is it important to learn Jehovah's thinking on matters now? Give an example.

pens, will you need to pray, do research, and talk to your family members or the elders before you make a decision? It is better if you learn how Jehovah views these matters now and make his thoughts your own. Then, if you are ever offered these things, you may find that they are not really tempting. You know exactly what to do because you have already decided to stay focused on serving Jehovah.

¹⁹ You can probably think of other situations that may suddenly test your loyalty to Jehovah. Of course, we cannot prepare for every possible situation. But if we meditate on Jehovah's thinking during our personal study, we will be more likely to remember what we have learned and know how to apply it in any situation. So when we study, let us find out how Jehovah views matters, make his thinking our own, and think about how this will help us to make wise decisions now and in the future.

JEHOVAH'S THOUGHTS AND YOUR FUTURE

²⁰ We all really look forward to the new world. Most of us hope to live forever in Paradise on

20, 21. (a) Why will we enjoy our freedom in the new world?
(b) How can we enjoy life now?

SOME EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

**We make Jehovah’s thinking,
or Jehovah’s thoughts, our own**
when we understand why Jehovah
views matters a certain way and
learn to view matters the way he
does

earth. Under God’s Kingdom, we will have freedom from all the pain and suffering that we experience in this system. And, of course, we will still have the freedom to make choices based on our preferences and desires.

²¹ But that does not mean that our freedom will be unlimited. Meek ones will still make decisions based on Jehovah’s laws and his thinking. And this will bring great joy and abundant peace. (Psalm 37: 11) Until that time comes, we can enjoy life now as we make Jehovah’s thoughts our own.



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