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**SONG 34**

Walking in Integrity

**PREVIEW**

What is integrity? Why does Jehovah value that quality in his servants? Why is integrity important to each of us? This article will help us find the Bible's answers to those questions. It will also help us see clearly how we can strengthen ourselves to maintain integrity from day to day. Doing so will bring us great blessings.

## Keep Your Integrity!

*“Until I die, I will not renounce my integrity!”*—JOB 27:5.

IMAGINE the following three scenes involving Jehovah's Witnesses. (1) A young girl is at school one day when the teacher asks all the students in class to take part in a holiday celebration. The girl knows that this holiday does not please God, so she respectfully refuses to join in. (2) A shy young man is preaching from door to door. He realizes that someone from his school lives at the next house—a fellow student who has made fun of Jehovah's Witnesses before. But the young man goes to the house and knocks on the door anyway. (3) A man is working hard to provide for his family, and one day his boss asks him to do something dishonest or illegal. Though he could lose his job, the man explains that he must be honest and obey the law because God requires that of his servants.—Rom. 13:1-4; Heb. 13:18.

<sup>2</sup> What quality do you see in those three individuals? You may notice several, such as courage and honesty. But one quality stands out as especially precious—integrity. Each of the three shows loyalty to Jehovah. Each one refuses to compromise on God's standards. Integrity moves those individuals to act as they do. Jehovah would surely feel proud of each one of them for showing that quality. We likewise want to make our Father in heaven proud. So let us discuss these questions: What is integrity? Why do we need integrity? And how can we strengthen our determination to maintain integrity in these difficult times?

1. How did the three Witnesses of Jehovah described in this paragraph take a stand for Jehovah?
2. What questions will we consider, and why?

## WHAT IS INTEGRITY?

<sup>3</sup> When applied to us as servants of God, integrity means wholehearted love for and unbreakable devotion to Jehovah as a Person, so that his will comes first in all our decisions. Consider some background. One basic meaning of the Bible word for “integrity” is this: complete, sound, or whole. For example, the Israelites offered up animals in sacrifice to Jehovah, and the Law said that the animals had to be sound.\* (Lev. 22:21, 22) God’s people were not allowed to offer up an animal that was missing a leg, an ear, or an eye; nor could they offer one full of disease. It was important to Jehovah that the animal be complete, sound, or whole. (Mal. 1:6-9) We can understand why Jehovah cares about soundness or completeness. When we purchase something, whether a piece of fruit, a book, or a tool, we do not want one that has gaping holes or parts missing. We want one that is complete, sound, or whole. Jehovah feels similarly when it comes to our love for him, our loyalty. It must be complete, sound, or whole.

<sup>4</sup> Should we conclude that we must be perfect in order to have integrity? After all, we may feel that we are less than sound, or even very flawed. Consider two reasons why we need not fear. First, Jehovah does not focus on our flaws.

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\* The Hebrew word rendered “sound” regarding an animal is related to the word for “integrity” used regarding humans.

3. (a) What does integrity mean for us? (b) What examples show that completeness, soundness, or wholeness matter to us?

4. (a) Why can an imperfect person have integrity? (b) According to Psalm 103:12-14, what does Jehovah expect of us?

His Word tells us: “If errors were what you watch, O Jah, then who, O Jehovah, could stand?” (Ps. 130:3) He knows that we are imperfect, sinful humans, and he forgives us generously. (Ps. 86:5) Second, Jehovah knows our limitations, and he does not expect more of us than we can do. **(Read Psalm 103:12-14.)** In what sense, then, can we be complete, sound, or whole in his eyes?

<sup>5</sup> For servants of Jehovah, the key to integrity is love. Our love for God, our loyal devotion to him as our heavenly Father, must remain complete, sound, or whole. If our love remains like that even when we are tested, then we have integrity. (1 Chron. 28:9; Matt. 22:37) Consider again the three Witnesses we described at the outset. Why do they act as they do? Does the young girl hate having fun at school, or does the young man hope to be embarrassed at a door, or does the family man want to lose his job? Of course not. Rather, they know that Jehovah has righteous standards, and their minds are focused on what pleases their heavenly Father. Their love for him moves them to put him first in the decisions they make. They thus put their integrity into action.

## WHY WE NEED INTEGRITY

<sup>6</sup> What makes integrity so vital that each of us needs it? You need integrity because Satan has challenged Jehovah, and he has challenged you. That rebellious angel made himself Satan, or

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5. For servants of Jehovah, how is love the key to integrity?

6. (a) Why do you need integrity? (b) How did Adam and Eve fail to show integrity?

“Resister,” back in the garden of Eden. He smeared Jehovah’s good name by implying that God is a bad, selfish, and dishonest Ruler. Sadly, Adam and Eve sided with Satan, rebelling against Jehovah. (Gen. 3:1-6) Life in Eden had given them countless opportunities to strengthen their love for Jehovah. But at the time of Satan’s challenge, their love was not complete, sound, or whole. Another question arose: Would any humans remain loyal to Jehovah God out of love for him? In other words, are humans capable of showing integrity? That question came to the fore in the case of Job.

<sup>7</sup> Job lived in the days when the Isra-

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7. As revealed at Job 1:8-11, how did Jehovah and Satan feel about Job’s integrity?

elites were in Egypt. His integrity was unique. Like us, the man was imperfect. He made mistakes. However, Jehovah loved Job for his integrity. It seems likely that Satan had already taunted Jehovah about human integrity. So Jehovah called Satan’s attention to Job. That man’s life course exposed Satan as a liar! Satan demanded that Job’s integrity be put to the test. Jehovah trusted his friend Job, and He allowed Satan to test him.—**Read Job 1:8-11.**

<sup>8</sup> Satan is cruel, and he is a murderer. He attacked Job’s belongings, robbing him of his wealth, his servants, and his reputation in the community. He attacked Job’s family, robbing him of his ten beloved children. Then he attacked

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8. How did Satan attack Job?

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What are some ways in which we strengthen ourselves to keep our integrity?

(See paragraph 12)



Job's body, robbing him of his health by afflicting him with painful boils that covered him from head to foot. Job's wife was distraught and overwhelmed with grief; she urged him to give up, to curse God and die. Job himself wished for death, but still he kept his integrity. Then Satan tried a different method of attack. He used three men who were companions of Job. The men visited Job for days, but they offered no comfort. Instead they heartlessly lectured and scolded him. They claimed that God was behind his troubles and cared nothing about his integrity. They even suggested that Job was a wicked man who deserved the terrible things that were happening to him!—Job 1:13-22; 2:7-11; 15:4, 5; 22:3-6; 25:4-6.

<sup>9</sup> How did Job handle all that adversity? He was not perfect. He angrily rebuked his false comforters, and he uttered what he admitted was wild talk. He defended his own righteousness more than he did God's. (Job 6:3; 13:4, 5; 32:2; 34:5) However, even in his worst moments, Job refused to turn against Jehovah God. He refused to believe the lies of those false friends. He said: "It is unthinkable for me to declare you men righteous! Until I die, I will not renounce my integrity!" (Job 27:5) That is a statement of vital importance. Job refused to give in; we can do the same.

<sup>10</sup> Satan makes the same charges about each of us. How are you involved? In effect, he says that you do not really love

Jehovah God, that you will stop serving him to save yourself, and that any integrity you have is false! (Job 2:4, 5; Rev. 12:10) How does that make you feel? It is hurtful, is it not? However, think about this: Jehovah trusts you enough to offer you a marvelous opportunity. Jehovah is allowing Satan to test your integrity. Jehovah is confident that you can keep your integrity and help to prove Satan a liar. And He promises to help you do that. (Heb. 13:6) What a privilege to be trusted by the Sovereign of the universe! Do you see why integrity is so important? It enables us to refute Satan's lies and to uphold our Father's good name and support his way of ruling. How can we build up this vital quality?

#### HOW WE CAN KEEP OUR INTEGRITY AT THIS TIME

<sup>11</sup> Satan has intensified his attacks in these troubled "last days." (2 Tim. 3:1) In such dark times, how can we strengthen ourselves to maintain our integrity? Again, we can learn a lot from Job. Long before his tests arose, Job had already built up a record of integrity. Consider three lessons we can learn from him about strengthening ourselves to keep our integrity.

<sup>12</sup> **Job strengthened his love for God by developing awe for Jehovah.** Job spent time contemplating the marvels of Jehovah's creation. (**Read Job 26:7, 8, 14.**) He was awestruck when he thought about the earth, the sky, the clouds, and the thunder, yet he recognized that he

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9. In the face of his trials, what did Job refuse to do?

10. How are you involved in the issue that Satan raised regarding Job?

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11. What can we learn from Job?

12. (a) As mentioned at Job 26:7, 8, 14, how did Job develop awe and respect for Jehovah? (b) How might we fill our heart with awe for God?



We strengthen ourselves to keep our integrity by rejecting pornography, having a balanced view of material things, and keeping our hope alive  
(See paragraphs 13-15)

knew very little about the vastness of creation. He also felt awe for Jehovah's expressions. "I have treasured up his sayings," Job said of God's words. (Job 23:12) Job's awe and respect for Jehovah moved him. He loved his Father and wanted to please him. Job's determination to keep his integrity thus grew stronger. We need to do as Job did. We know far more about the marvels of creation than did people of Job's time. And we have the entire inspired Bible to help us to know Jehovah as he really is. All that we learn can help to fill our heart with awe. Our awe and respect for Jehovah will, in turn, move us to love and obey him and to build up our deep desire to keep our integrity.—Job 28:28.

**13 Job strengthened himself to keep**

13-14. (a) As noted at Job 31:1, how did Job prove to be obedient? (b) How might we follow Job's example?

**his integrity through acts of obedience.** Job knew that integrity calls for obedience. In fact, each act of obedience strengthens our determination to keep our integrity. Job worked hard to obey God in his daily life. For example, he was careful about his behavior with those of the opposite sex. **(Read Job 31:1.)** As a married man, he knew that it was improper to pay romantic attention to any woman other than his wife. Today, we live in a world that bombards us with sexual temptation. Like Job, will we refuse to pay improper attention to anyone to whom we are not married? Will we also refuse to look at lewd or pornographic images in any form? (Matt. 5:28) If we exert such self-control daily, we will strengthen ourselves to keep our integrity.

**14** Job also obeyed Jehovah in the way he viewed material things. Job saw that

if he put his trust in his possessions, he would commit a grave error deserving of punishment. (Job 31:24, 25, 28) Today, we live in a very materialistic world. If we develop a balanced view of money and possessions, as the Bible admonishes us to do, we will strengthen our determination to keep our integrity.—Prov. 30:8, 9; Matt. 6:19-21.

**15 Job kept his integrity by focusing on the hope that God would reward him.** He believed that God did care about his integrity. (Job 31:6) Despite his trials, Job was confident that Jehovah would finally reward him. This confidence surely helped him cling to his integrity. Jehovah was so delighted with Job's integrity that He rewarded him richly while he was still an imperfect man! (Job 42:12-17; Jas. 5:11) And even greater rewards lie ahead for Job. Do you have strong hope that Jehovah will reward your integrity? Our God has not changed. (Mal. 3:6) If we remember

15. (a) The prospect of what reward helped Job keep his integrity? (b) Why might it help us to keep in mind the hope that Jehovah offers?

that he values our integrity, we can keep our hope for a bright future alive in our heart.—1 Thess. 5:8, 9.

**16** Be resolved, then, never to let go of your integrity! At times, you may feel lonely in such a course, but you will never be alone. You will be among millions of faithful integrity-keepers around the world. You will also join the ranks of men and women of faith who kept their integrity in the past, even under the threat of death. (Heb. 11:36-38; 12:1) May all of us be determined to live by Job's words: "I will not renounce my integrity!" And may our integrity glorify Jehovah forever!

16. What should we be resolved to do?

**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 4:** We see Job as a young father teaching some of his children about the marvels of Jehovah's creation. **Page 6:** A brother refuses to join his workmates in viewing pornography; he resists the urge to buy a large and expensive television that he does not need and cannot afford; and he takes time to meditate prayerfully on the Paradise hope.

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What is integrity?
- Why do you need integrity?
- How can you strengthen yourself to keep your integrity?

**SONG 80**

“Taste and See That  
Jehovah Is Good”

**PREVIEW**

None of us are born meek. We must develop meekness. We may find that we can be meek when dealing with peaceful people, but we may find it difficult to remain meek when confronted by proud individuals. This article will discuss some challenges we may have to overcome in order to develop the beautiful quality of meekness.

## Seek Meekness and Please Jehovah

“Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth  
. . . Seek meekness.”—ZEPH. 2:3.

THE Bible describes Moses as being “by far the meekest of all the men on the face of the earth.” (Num. 12:3) Does this mean that he was weak, indecisive, and afraid of confrontations? That is how some might describe a meek person. But such an idea is far from the truth. Moses was a strong, decisive, and courageous servant of God. With Jehovah’s help, he confronted the mighty ruler of Egypt, led perhaps 3,000,000 people through a desert, and helped the nation of Israel conquer their enemies.

<sup>2</sup> We do not face the challenges that Moses overcame, but each day we must deal with people or situations that make it difficult to be meek. However, we have a powerful incentive to develop this quality. Jehovah promises that “the meek will possess the earth.” (Ps. 37:11) Would you describe yourself as being meek? Would others describe you that way? Before we can answer those important questions, we need to know what it means to be meek.

### WHAT IS MEEKNESS?

<sup>3</sup> Meekness\* is like a beautiful painting. In what way?

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\* **EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED: Meekness.** People who are meek are gentle when dealing with others and remain mild-tempered even when provoked. **Humility.** People who are humble are free of pride or arrogance; they view others as being superior to them. When referring to Jehovah, humility means that he deals with those who are inferior to him in a loving and merciful manner.

1-2. (a) How is Moses described, and what did he do? (b) What incentive do we have to develop meekness?

3-4. (a) To what can meekness be likened? (b) What four qualities do we need if we are to be meek, and why?

Just as an artist combines a number of appealing colors to produce a painting, we must combine a number of appealing qualities to be meek. Prominent among those qualities are humility, submissiveness, mildness, and inner strength. Why do we need those particular qualities if we want to please Jehovah?

<sup>4</sup> Only **humble** people will **submit** to God's will. Part of God's will is that we be **mild**. (Matt. 5:5; Gal. 5:23) When we do God's will, we make Satan furious. So even though we are humble and mild, many people who are part of Satan's world hate us. (John 15:18, 19) As a result, we need **inner strength** to resist Satan.

<sup>5</sup> The opposite of a meek person is someone who is haughty, shows uncontrolled anger, and does not obey Jehovah. That describes Satan perfectly. No wonder he hates meek people! They expose the flaws in his personality. And even worse for Satan, they prove that he

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5-6. (a) Why does Satan hate meek people?  
(b) What questions will we answer?

is a liar. Why? Because no matter what he says or does, he cannot stop meek people from serving Jehovah!—Job 2:3-5.

<sup>6</sup> When might we find it a challenge to be meek? And why should we continue to seek meekness? To answer those questions, we will review the example set by Moses, three Hebrew captives in Babylon, and Jesus.

#### WHEN IS IT A CHALLENGE TO BE MEEK?

<sup>7</sup> **When given authority:** It can be a challenge for those who have authority to remain meek, especially when someone they oversee treats them disrespectfully or questions their judgment. Has that ever happened to you? What if a family member acted that way? How would you respond? Consider how Moses dealt with that situation.

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah appointed Moses as leader of Israel and allowed him to record the laws that governed that nation. There

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7-8. How did Moses respond when he was treated without respect?

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Moses pleaded with Jehovah to end the punishment of Miriam  
(See paragraph 8)





When others oppose us, we answer in a respectful manner (See paragraph 13)

was no doubt that Jehovah was backing Moses. Even so, Moses' own sister and brother, Miriam and Aaron, spoke against him and questioned his judgment in choosing his wife. Some men in Moses' position might have become angry and vengeful—but not Moses. He did not become offended easily. He even pleaded with Jehovah to end the punishment of Miriam. (Num. 12:1-13) Why did Moses react that way?

<sup>9</sup> Moses had allowed himself to be trained by Jehovah. Some 40 years earlier, when he was a member of the Egyptian royal family, Moses was not meek. In fact, he had been so quick-tempered that he killed a man who he judged was acting unfairly. Moses assumed that Jehovah would agree with his actions. Jehovah spent 40 years helping Moses to understand that he needed more than courage to lead the Israelites; he needed to be meek. And to be meek, he also needed to be humble, submissive, and mild. He learned that lesson well and became an excellent overseer.—Ex. 2:11, 12; Acts 7:21-30, 36.

9-10. (a) What did Jehovah help Moses to understand? (b) What can family heads and elders learn from Moses?

<sup>10</sup> Today, family heads and elders do well to imitate Moses. When treated disrespectfully, do not become easily offended. Humbly acknowledge any faults you have. (Eccl. 7:9, 20) Submissively follow Jehovah's direction on how to handle problems. And always answer mildly. (Prov. 15:1) Family heads and overseers who respond that way please Jehovah, promote peace, and set an example of how to be meek.

<sup>11</sup> **When persecuted:** Throughout history, human rulers have persecuted Jehovah's people. They may charge us with various "crimes," but the real issue is that we choose to "obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) We might be ridiculed, imprisoned, or even physically mistreated. With Jehovah's help, however, we will not retaliate but will remain mild throughout the test.

<sup>12</sup> Consider the example that three Hebrew exiles—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—set for us.\* The king of Babylon commanded them to bow down to a large image of gold. Mildly, they ex-

\* The Babylonians gave these three Hebrews the names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.—Dan. 1:7.

11-13. What example did three Hebrews set for us?

plained to the king why they would not worship the image. They remained submissive to God despite the king's threat to burn them in a blazing furnace. Jehovah chose to save those men immediately, but they did not presume that he would do that for them. Rather, they were willing to accept whatever outcome Jehovah would permit. (Dan. 3:1, 8-28) They proved that meek people are truly courageous—no king, no threat, and no punishment can break our resolve to give Jehovah our “exclusive devotion.” —Ex. 20:4, 5.

<sup>13</sup> When our loyalty to God is tested, how can we imitate the three Hebrews? We humbly trust that Jehovah will care for us. (Ps. 118:6, 7) We answer those who accuse us of wrongdoing in a mild, respectful manner. (1 Pet. 3:15) And we absolutely refuse to compromise our friendship with our loving Father.

<sup>14</sup> **When dealing with stress:** All of us feel stress for a variety of reasons. We may have felt it before taking a test at school or performing a particular task at work. Or we become stressed just thinking about a medical procedure we might need. When we are under stress, it is difficult to be meek. Incidents that normally do not trouble us might begin to irritate us. Our words may become harsh and our tone cold. If you have ever felt stressed, consider the example of Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> During the final months of his life on earth, Jesus was under intense stress. He knew that he would be executed

and that he would suffer terribly. (John 3:14, 15; Gal. 3:13) Some months before his death, he said that he was distressed. (Luke 12:50) And just days before his death, Jesus said: “I am troubled.” We can sense his humility and his submissiveness to God as he poured out his feelings in prayer: “Father, save me out of this hour. Nevertheless, this is why I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” (John 12:27, 28) When the time came, Jesus courageously handed himself over to God's enemies, who executed him in the most agonizing and humiliating way possible. Despite the stress, despite the suffering, Jesus meekly did God's will. Without a doubt, we can say that Jesus is the most outstanding example of someone showing meekness under stress!—**Read Isaiah 53:7, 10.**

<sup>16</sup> On the final night of Jesus' earthly life, his closest friends tested his meekness. Imagine the stress Jesus felt that night. Would he remain perfectly faithful until death? The lives of billions of people hung in the balance. (Rom. 5:18, 19) Even more important, his Father's reputation was involved. (Job 2:4) Then, during his last meal with his closest friends, the apostles, their conversation degenerated into “a heated dispute” over “which one of them was considered to be the greatest.” Jesus had corrected his friends on this matter a number of times, including earlier that same evening! Remarkably, Jesus did not become irritated. Instead,

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14-15. (a) What can happen when we are under stress? (b) According to Isaiah 53:7, 10, why can we say that Jesus is the most outstanding example of someone showing meekness under stress?

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16-17. (a) How did Jesus' friends test his meekness? (b) How can we imitate Jesus?



Jesus is the greatest example of meekness (See paragraphs 16-17)

he responded with mildness. Kindly, but firmly, Jesus explained—again—the attitude they should have. And he then commended his friends for loyally sticking with him.—Luke 22:24-28; John 13:1-5, 12-15.

<sup>17</sup> How would you have responded if you had been in a similar situation? We can imitate Jesus and remain mild-tempered even when we are under stress. Submissively obey Jehovah’s command to “continue putting up with one another.” (Col. 3:13) We will obey this command if we remember that we all say and do things that irritate others. (Prov. 12:18; Jas. 3:2, 5) And try to mention the good that you see in others.—Eph. 4:29.

#### WHY CONTINUE TO SEEK MEEKNESS?

<sup>18</sup> **We will make better decisions.** When we face difficult choices in life, Jehovah will help us make good decisions—but only if we are meek. He promises that he will hear “the request of the meek.” (Ps. 10:17) And he will do more than hear our request. The Bi-

18. How does Jehovah help meek people make good decisions, but what must they do?

ble promises: “He will guide the meek in what is right, and he will teach the meek ones his way.” (Ps. 25:9) Jehovah provides that guidance in the Bible and in publications\* and through programs produced by “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45-47) We must do our part by humbly acknowledging that we need help, by studying the material Jehovah supplies, and by submissively applying what we learn.

<sup>19</sup> **We will avoid making mistakes.** Think again about Moses. For decades he remained meek and pleased Jehovah. Then, toward the end of the difficult 40-year journey in the wilderness, Moses failed to display meekness. His sister, most likely the one who helped save his life in Egypt, had just died and was buried at Kadesh. And now once again the Israelites were insisting that they were not being cared for properly. This time they were “quarreling

\* For example, see the article “Make Decisions That Honor God,” published in the April 15, 2011, issue of *The Watchtower*.

19-21. What mistake did Moses make at Kadesh, and what lessons can we learn from it?

with Moses” over a lack of water. Despite all the miracles that Jehovah had performed through Moses and despite Moses’ long record of unselfish leadership, the people complained. They complained not only about the lack of water but also about Moses, as if it were his fault that they were thirsty.—Num. 20: 1-5, 9-11.

<sup>20</sup> In the heat of anger, Moses lost his mild disposition. Rather than speak in faith to the rock, as Jehovah had commanded, Moses spoke in bitterness to the people and gave credit to himself. Then, he struck the rock twice and much water gushed out. Pride and anger caused him to make a painful mistake. (Ps. 106:32, 33) For his temporary lack of meekness, Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land.—Num. 20:12.

<sup>21</sup> From this incident, we learn valuable lessons. First, we must constantly work at maintaining our meek attitude. If we neglect it for a moment, pride may reassert itself and cause us to speak and act foolishly. Second, stress can weaken us, so we must strive to be meek, even when we are under pressure.

<sup>22</sup> **We will be protected.** Soon, Jehovah will remove all wicked people from the earth, and only the meek will remain. Then the earth will truly be peaceful. (Ps. 37:10, 11) Will you be among those meek ones? You can be if you act on Jehovah’s warm invitation recorded by the prophet Zephaniah.—**Read Zephaniah 2:3.**

<sup>23</sup> Why does Zephaniah 2:3 say: “Probably you will be concealed”? That statement does not mean that Jehovah is incapable of protecting those who want to please him and whom he loves. Instead, it indicates that we have a part in determining the outcome. We have the possibility of surviving “the day of Jehovah’s anger” and of living forever if we make the effort now to seek meekness and please Jehovah.

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22-23. (a) Why should we continue to seek meekness? (b) What does the statement at Zephaniah 2:3 indicate?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 12:** Jesus remains mild-tempered and calmly corrects his disciples after they argued about who is greater.

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## WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT MEEKNESS FROM . . .

■ Moses?

■ Hananiah, Mishael,  
and Azariah?

■ Jesus?

**SONG 46**

We Thank You, Jehovah

**PREVIEW**

What can we learn from Jehovah, Jesus, and a Samaritan leper about showing appreciation? This article will consider those examples and more. We will discuss why it is so important to express gratitude and review some specific ways that we can do it.

## Why Express Appreciation?

*“Show yourselves thankful.”—COL. 3:15.*

THE ten men were desperate. They had leprosy, and the future looked bleak. But one day, they saw Jesus, the Great Teacher, from a distance. They had heard that Jesus healed all sorts of sicknesses, and they were convinced that he could heal them too. So they cried out: “Jesus, Instructor, have mercy on us!” The ten men were completely cured. No doubt all of them were grateful for Jesus’ kindness. One of them, however, did more than **feel** gratitude—he **expressed** his appreciation\* to Jesus. That healed man, a Samaritan, felt compelled to glorify God “with a loud voice.”—Luke 17:12-19.

<sup>2</sup> Like the Samaritan, we want to express our gratitude to those who are kind. But on occasion, we may forget to put our feelings of appreciation into words or actions.

<sup>3</sup> In this article, we will consider why it is important for us to express appreciation by what we say and do. We will learn from the examples of some Bible characters who were grateful and others who were not. Then we will discuss specific ways in which we can express appreciation.

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\* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** To **appreciate** someone or something means to recognize the value of that person or that thing. The word can refer to feelings of heartfelt gratitude.

1. How did a Samaritan whom Jesus healed show appreciation?
- 2-3. (a) Why might we fail to show appreciation? (b) What will we consider in this article?

## WHY SHOULD WE EXPRESS APPRECIATION?

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah sets the example for us in expressing appreciation. One way he does this is by rewarding those who please him. (2 Sam. 22:21; Ps. 13:6; Matt. 10:40, 41) And the Scriptures encourage us to “become imitators of God, as beloved children.” (Eph. 5:1) So a key reason why we should express appreciation is that we want to follow Jehovah’s example.

<sup>5</sup> Consider another reason why we want to express appreciation to others. Appreciation is like a good meal—it is more enjoyable when shared. When we *feel* appreciated, we are happy. When we *express* our appreciation, we make *others* happy. The person who receives our gratitude knows that his efforts to help

4-5. Why should we express appreciation?

us, or to give us something we need, were worthwhile. As a result, the bonds of friendship between us and that person are strengthened.

<sup>6</sup> Our expressions of gratitude are valuable. The Bible states: “Like apples of gold in silver carvings is a word spoken at the right time.” (Prov. 25:11) Imagine how beautiful an apple made of gold and set in silver would look! And just think how valuable it would be! How would you feel if you received such a gift? Well, the words of gratitude you express to others can be just as valuable. And consider this fact: An apple made of gold could last indefinitely. Likewise, your expressions of appreciation may be remembered and treasured by the recipient for the rest of his life.

6. What are some similarities between words of appreciation and apples made of gold?

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What does Paul’s letter to the Romans teach us about expressing appreciation?

(See paragraphs 8-9)



## THEY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION

<sup>7</sup> Many of God's servants in the past showed gratitude. One of them was **David**. (**Read Psalm 27:4.**) He deeply appreciated pure worship and expressed his feelings in a tangible way. He contributed a fortune toward the construction of the temple. **Asaph's descendants** expressed appreciation by writing psalms, or songs of praise. In one song, they gave thanks to God and declared their admiration for Jehovah's "wondrous works." (Ps. 75:1) Clearly, David and Asaph's descendants wanted to show Jehovah how much they appreciated all the blessings they had received from him. Can you think of ways that you can imitate those psalmists?

<sup>8</sup> The apostle **Paul** appreciated his brothers and sisters and showed it in the way he talked about them. He always thanked God for them in his private prayers. He also expressed his appreciation when writing to them. In the first 15 verses of Romans 16, Paul mentions 27 fellow Christians by name. Paul specifically recalled that Prisca and Aquila "risked their own necks" for him, and he described Phoebe as "a defender of many," including Paul. He commended those beloved, hardworking brothers and sisters.—Rom. 16:1-15.

<sup>9</sup> Paul was aware that his brothers and sisters were imperfect, but in closing his letter to the Romans, he chose to focus on their good qualities. Imagine how encouraged those brothers and sisters

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7. How did David, as seen at Psalm 27:4, and other writers of psalms express their appreciation?

8-9. How did the apostle Paul show appreciation for his brothers and sisters, and what no doubt was the result?

must have been to hear Paul's comments read aloud to the congregation! As a result, their bond of friendship with Paul no doubt grew stronger. Do you regularly express appreciation for the good things that members of your congregation say and do?

<sup>10</sup> In his messages to certain congregations of Asia Minor, **Jesus** expressed appreciation for the work his followers did. For example, he began his message to the congregation in Thyatira by saying: "I know your deeds, and your love and faith and ministry and endurance, and that your deeds of late are more than those you did at first." (Rev. 2:19) Jesus not only mentioned their increased activity but also commended them for the qualities that motivated their good deeds. Although Jesus needed to counsel some in Thyatira, he still began and ended his message with encouragement. (Rev. 2:25-28) Think of the authority Jesus has as head of all the congregations. He does not have to thank us for the work we do for him. Even so, he makes a point of expressing appreciation. What an excellent example he sets for elders!

## THEY SHOWED A LACK OF APPRECIATION

<sup>11</sup> Sadly, some Bible characters displayed a lack of appreciation. For example, although **Esau** was raised by parents who loved and respected Jehovah, he lacked appreciation for sacred things. (**Read Hebrews 12:16.**) How did his ungrateful attitude become evident? Esau

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10. What can we learn from the way that Jesus expressed appreciation for his followers?

11. As shown at Hebrews 12:16, what attitude did Esau have regarding sacred things?



Teach your children to express appreciation  
(See paragraph 15)

rashly sold his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob, for a mere bowl of stew. (Gen. 25:30-34) Later, Esau bitterly regretted the choice he had made. But he had been ungrateful for what he had, so he had no basis for complaining when he did not receive the birthright blessing.

<sup>12</sup> The **Israelites** had many reasons for showing appreciation. They were freed from slavery after Jehovah brought the Ten Plagues on Egypt. Then God saved them from disaster by destroying the entire Egyptian army in the Red Sea. The Israelites were so grateful that they sang a victory song of praises to Jehovah. But did they remain grateful?

<sup>13</sup> When the Israelites encountered new challenges, they soon forgot about all the good things Jehovah had done for them. They then revealed their lack of appreciation. (Ps. 106:7) How? “The entire assembly of the Israelites began to murmur against Moses and Aaron”—in reality, murmuring against Jehovah. (Ex. 16:2, 8) He was disappointed with the ungrateful attitude his people showed. He

12-13. How did the Israelites reveal a lack of appreciation, and what was the result?

later foretold that this entire generation of Israelites would perish in the wilderness, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. (Num. 14:22-24; 26:65) Let us see how we can avoid following these bad examples and imitate the good ones.

#### EXPRESS APPRECIATION TODAY

<sup>14</sup> **In the family.** The entire family benefits when each member expresses appreciation. The more marriage mates show gratitude to each other, the closer they become. They also find it easier to forgive each other’s mistakes. A husband who appreciates his wife not only notices the good things she says and does but also “rises up and praises her.” (Prov. 31:10, 28) And a wise wife lets her husband know specifically what she appreciates about him.

<sup>15</sup> Parents, how can you teach your children to show appreciation? Remember that your children will imitate what you say and do. So set a good example by saying thank you when your children do things for you. In addition, teach your

14-15. (a) How can marriage mates show that they appreciate each other? (b) How can parents teach their children to show appreciation?



Assisting in Kingdom Hall cleaning is an excellent way to show our appreciation

(See paragraph 18)

children to say thank you when people do things for them. Help your children understand that expressing gratitude comes from the heart and that their words can do much good. For example, a young woman named Clary says: “At 32 years of age, my mother was suddenly left with three children to raise on her own. When I turned 32, I thought about how difficult it must have been for her at that age. So I told her how much I appreciate all that she sacrificed to raise my brothers and me. Recently, she told me that my words are very dear to her heart, that she often reflects on them, and that they always brighten her day.”

**16 In the congregation.** When we express appreciation to our brothers and sisters, we encourage them. For example, Jorge, a 28-year-old elder, became seriously ill. He could not attend meetings for a month. Even after returning to the meetings, he was still not able to handle parts on the program. Jorge admits: “I felt worthless because of my limitations and my inability to handle con-

16. Give an example of how expressing appreciation can encourage others.

gregation responsibilities. But after one meeting, a brother told me: ‘I want to thank you for the fine example you have set for my family. You have no idea how much we have enjoyed your talks during the past few years. They have helped us to grow spiritually.’ I choked up, and my eyes filled with tears. His words were exactly what I needed to hear.”

**17 To our generous God.** Jehovah has given us an abundance of spiritual food. For example, we receive helpful instruction through our meetings, our magazines, and our websites. Have you ever heard a talk, read an article, or watched a broadcast and thought, ‘That is just what I needed’? How can we show our appreciation to Jehovah? (**Read Colossians 3:15.**) One way is by regularly thanking him in our prayers for these good gifts.—Jas. 1:17.

**18** We also express appreciation to Jehovah when we keep our place of worship clean and tidy. We share regularly in

17. As mentioned at Colossians 3:15, how can we show appreciation to Jehovah for his generosity?

18. In what ways might we show appreciation for our Kingdom Hall?

cleaning and maintaining our Kingdom Halls, and those who handle electronic equipment used by the congregation do so carefully. When we maintain our Kingdom Halls properly, they will last longer and will need fewer major repairs. That way, we make more money available to build and renovate other Kingdom Halls around the world.

**19 To those who work hard for us.** When we express appreciation, our words might change the way a person feels about challenges that he or she faces. Consider the experience of one circuit overseer and his wife. After a long winter's day in the ministry, they returned to their accommodations exhausted. It was so cold that the wife slept in her winter coat. In the morning, she told her husband that she felt unable to continue in the traveling work. Later that very morning, a letter from the branch office arrived, and it was addressed to her. The letter warmly commended her for her ministry and endurance. It acknowledged how dif-

19. What did you learn from the experience of one circuit overseer and his wife?

ficult it can be to move from one accommodation to the next every week. Her husband says: "She was so touched by that commendation that she never again spoke of leaving the traveling work. In fact, several times she encouraged me to continue when I thought of quitting." That couple remained in the traveling work for almost 40 years.

**20** May we try each day to show ourselves thankful by what we say and do. Our heartfelt words or actions may be just what another person needs to make it through one more day in this unthankful world. And our expressions of thanks will build bonds of friendship that can last forever. Most important, we will be imitating our generous, appreciative Father, Jehovah.

20. What should we try to do each day, and why?

**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 15:** Paul's letter is read to the Roman congregation; Aquila, Priscilla, Phoebe, and others are delighted to hear their names mentioned. **Page 17:** A mother helps her daughter express appreciation for the good example set by an elderly sister.

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Why should we express appreciation to others?
- What Bible examples show genuine appreciation in action?
- How can we show heartfelt appreciation today?

**SONG 3**

Our Strength, Our Hope,  
Our Confidence

**PREVIEW**

This article is the first in a series of four that will discuss why we can be sure that Jehovah cares about us. The remaining three articles will appear in the May 2019 issue of *The Watchtower*. The titles of those articles are “Love and Justice in the Christian Congregation,” “Love and Justice in the Face of Wickedness,” and “Providing Comfort for Victims of Abuse.”

**PART 1 OF 4**

# Love and Justice in Ancient Israel

*“He loves righteousness and justice. The earth is filled with Jehovah’s loyal love.”—PS. 33:5.*

ALL of us want to be loved. And all of us want to be treated fairly. If we are repeatedly denied love and justice, we may feel worthless and hopeless.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah knows that we long for love and yearn for justice. (Ps. 33:5) We can be sure that our God loves us dearly and wants us to be treated fairly. This becomes evident when we look closely at the Law that Jehovah gave to the nation of Israel through Moses. If you have a heart starved for affection or a spirit crushed by injustice, please consider how the Mosaic Law\* reveals Jehovah’s concern for his people.

<sup>3</sup> When we study the Mosaic Law, we discover the warm feelings of our loving God, Jehovah. **(Read Romans 13:8-10.)** In this article, we will examine just a few of the laws given to Israel and answer these questions: Why can we say that the Law was built on love? Why can we say that the Law promoted justice? How were those with authority required to administer the Law? And whom did the Law specifically protect? The answers to those questions can bring us comfort, give us hope, and draw us closer to our loving Father.—Acts 17:27; Rom. 15:4.

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\* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** The 600 and more laws that Jehovah gave to the Israelites through Moses are referred to as “the Law,” “the Law of Moses,” “**the Mosaic Law**,” and “the commandments.” In addition, the first five books of the Bible (Genesis through Deuteronomy) are often referred to as the Law. Sometimes this term is used with reference to the entire inspired Hebrew Scriptures.

1-2. (a) What do all of us want? (b) Of what can we be sure?

3. (a) As explained at Romans 13:8-10, what do we discover when we study the Mosaic Law? (b) What questions will this article answer?

## A LAW CODE BUILT ON LOVE

<sup>4</sup> We can say that the Mosaic Law was built on love because love motivates all that Jehovah does. (1 John 4:8) Jehovah founded that entire code of laws on two basic commands—love God, and love your neighbor. (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5; **read Matthew 22:36-40.**) So we can expect that each of the 600 and more commandments that make up the Law reveals a facet of Jehovah’s love. Let us look at some examples.

<sup>5</sup> **Be loyal to your marriage mate, and care for your children.** Jehovah wants married couples to develop a love so strong that it lasts for life. (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:3-6) Adultery is one of the most unloving crimes a person can commit. With good reason, the seventh of the Ten Commandments prohibited adultery. (Deut. 5:18) It is a sin “against God” and a cruel blow to a marriage mate. (Gen. 39:7-9) A victim of adultery might feel the pain of betrayal for decades.

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah is keenly aware of how marriage mates treat each other. He particularly wanted Israelite wives to be treated well. A husband who respected the Law would love his wife and would not divorce her for trivial reasons. (Deut. 24:1-4; Matt. 19:3, 8) But if a serious problem arose and he did divorce her, he had to give her a certificate of divorce. This certificate protected a woman from false accusations of immorality. In addition,

before the husband could give his wife the certificate of divorce, he apparently had to consult the city elders. In this way, the elders would have the opportunity to try to help the couple save their marriage. When an Israelite man divorced his wife for selfish reasons, Jehovah did not always intervene. Nevertheless, he saw the tears that the wife shed, and he felt her pain.—Mal. 2:13-16.

<sup>7</sup> The Law also reveals that Jehovah cares deeply about the welfare of children. Jehovah commanded parents to provide not only for their children’s physical needs but also for their spiritual needs. Parents were to take every opportunity to help their children appreciate Jehovah’s Law and learn to love him. (Deut. 6:6-9; 7:13) One of the reasons the Israelites were punished by Jehovah was that they mistreated some of their children in a shocking way. (Jer. 7:31, 33) Parents were to view their children, not as mere property that they could neglect or mistreat, but as an inheritance, a gift from Jehovah to be cherished.—Ps. 127:3.

<sup>8</sup> **Lessons:** Jehovah pays close attention to how marriage mates treat each other. He wants parents to love their children, and he holds parents accountable for the way they treat them.

<sup>9</sup> **Do not covet.** The last of the Ten Commandments prohibited coveting, or developing a wrong desire for what belongs to another. (Deut. 5:21; Rom. 7:7)

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4. (a) Why can we say that the Mosaic Law was built on love? (b) As recorded at Matthew 22:36-40, what commandments did Jesus highlight?

5-6. What does Jehovah want married couples to do, and of what is Jehovah aware? Give an example.

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7-8. (a) What did Jehovah command parents to do? (See cover picture.) (b) What lessons do we learn?

9-11. Why did Jehovah give the law prohibiting coveting?

Jehovah gave this law to teach a valuable lesson—his people must guard their heart, that is, their thoughts, feelings, and reasonings. He knows that wicked acts begin as wicked thoughts and feelings. (Prov. 4:23) If an Israelite allowed wrong desires to grow in his heart, he would likely treat others in an unloving way. King David, for example, fell into that trap. Normally, he was a good man. But on one occasion, he coveted another man's wife. His desire led to sin. (Jas. 1:14, 15) David committed adultery, tried to deceive the woman's husband, and then had him killed.—2 Sam. 11:2-4; 12:7-11.

<sup>10</sup> Jehovah knew when an Israelite broke the law about coveting—He can read hearts. (1 Chron. 28:9) The law against coveting told his people that they should avoid thoughts that lead to bad behavior. What a wise and loving Father Jehovah is!

<sup>11</sup> **Lessons:** Jehovah sees beyond a person's outward appearance. He sees what we really are inside, in our heart. (1 Sam. 16:7) No thought, no feeling, no action can be kept secret from him. He looks for and encourages the good in us. But he wants us to identify and control wrong thoughts before they become wrong actions.—2 Chron. 16:9; Matt. 5:27-30.

#### A LAW CODE THAT PROMOTED JUSTICE

<sup>12</sup> The Mosaic Law also emphasizes that Jehovah loves justice. (Ps. 37:28; Isa. 61:8) He set the perfect example of how to treat others fairly. When the Israelites obeyed the laws that Jehovah gave, he blessed them. When they ignored his just

12. What does the Mosaic Law emphasize?

and righteous standards, they suffered. Consider two more laws from the Ten Commandments.

<sup>13</sup> **Worship Jehovah exclusively.** The first two of the Ten Commandments required that the Israelites devote themselves exclusively to Jehovah and warned against the worship of idols. (Ex. 20:3-6) Those commandments were not for Jehovah's benefit. Rather, they were for the benefit of his people. When his people remained loyal to him, they prospered. When they worshipped the gods of other nations, they suffered.

<sup>14</sup> Think about the Canaanites. They worshipped lifeless idols rather than the true and living God. As a result, they degraded themselves. (Ps. 115:4-8) As part of their worship, they engaged in defiling sexual acts and horrifying child sacrifices. Likewise, when the Israelites ignored Jehovah and chose to worship idols, they degraded themselves and hurt their families. (2 Chron. 28:1-4) Those in authority abandoned Jehovah's standards of justice. They abused their power and oppressed weak and vulnerable ones. (Ezek. 34:1-4) Jehovah warned the Israelites that he would execute judgment on those who victimized defenseless women and children. (Deut. 10:17, 18; 27:19) By contrast, Jehovah blessed his people when they were loyal to him and treated one another justly.—1 Ki. 10:4-9.

<sup>15</sup> **Lessons:** Jehovah is not to blame when those who claim to serve him ig-

13-14. What did the first two of the Ten Commandments require, and how would obeying those laws have benefited the Israelites?

15. What lessons do we learn about Jehovah?

nore his standards and harm his people. However, Jehovah loves us and knows when we suffer injustice. He feels our pain more keenly than a mother feels the suffering of her baby. (Isa. 49:15) Although he may not intervene immediately, in due time he will hold unrepentant wrongdoers to account for the way they have treated others.

#### HOW WAS THE LAW TO BE ADMINISTERED?

<sup>16</sup> The Mosaic Law covered many aspects of an Israelite's life, so it was vital that the appointed older men judge Jehovah's people with righteous judgment. They were responsible for handling not only spiritual matters but also civil and criminal cases. Note the following examples.

<sup>17</sup> If an Israelite killed someone, he was not arbitrarily executed. The elders of his city would investigate the circumstances before deciding if the death penalty was appropriate. (Deut. 19:2-7, 11-13) The elders also judged numerous aspects of daily life—from resolving public controversies over property to settling private marital disputes. (Ex. 21:35; Deut. 22:13-19) When the elders were fair and the Israelites obeyed the Law, everyone benefited, and the nation brought honor to Jehovah.—Lev. 20:7, 8; Isa. 48:17, 18.

<sup>18</sup> **Lessons:** Every aspect of our life is important to Jehovah. He wants us to be just and loving when dealing with others. And he takes notice of what we say and do, even in the privacy of our home.—Heb. 4:13.

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16-18. What was the scope of the Mosaic Law, and what lessons do we learn?



Jehovah loves us and knows  
when we suffer injustice  
(See paragraph 15)

<sup>19</sup> Jehovah wanted to save his people from the corrupting influence of neighboring nations. So he required that the elders and judges enforce the Law impartially. However, those doing the judging were not to treat his people in a harsh or rigid manner. Instead, they were to love justice.—Deut. 1:13-17; 16:18-20.

<sup>20</sup> Jehovah has compassion for his people, so he put safeguards in place to prevent individuals from being treated unfairly. For example, the Law limited the possibility that a person would be falsely accused of a crime. A defendant had the right to know who was accusing him. (Deut. 19:16-19; 25:1) And before he could be convicted, at least two witnesses had to give evidence. (Deut. 17:6; 19:15) What about an Israelite who committed a crime that was seen by only one witness? He could not

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19-21. (a) How were elders and judges to treat God's people? (b) What safeguards did Jehovah put in place, and what lessons do we learn?

assume that he would get away with his wrongdoing. Jehovah saw what he did. In the family, fathers were given authority, but that authority had limits. In some family disputes, the elders of the city had the responsibility to become involved and render a final judgment.—Deut. 21:18-21.

<sup>21</sup> **Lessons:** Jehovah sets the perfect example; nothing he does is unfair. (Ps. 9:7) He rewards those who loyally uphold his standards, but he punishes those who abuse their power. (2 Sam. 22:21-23; Ezek. 9:9, 10) Some may act wickedly and seem to escape punishment, but when Jehovah determines that the time is right, he brings them to justice. (Prov. 28:13) And if they do not re-

pent, they soon learn that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”—Heb. 10:30, 31.

#### WHOM DID THE LAW SPECIFICALLY PROTECT?

<sup>22</sup> The Law specifically protected those who could not protect themselves, such as orphans, widows, and foreign residents. The judges in Israel were told: “You must not pervert the judgment of the foreign resident or of the fatherless child, and you must not seize the garment of a widow as security for a loan.” (Deut. 24:17) Jehovah showed tender

22-24. (a) Whom did the Law specifically protect, and what do we learn about Jehovah? (b) What warning is found at Exodus 22:22-24?

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When settling disputes, elders were to reflect Jehovah’s love of people and of justice

(See paragraph 22)



personal interest in the most vulnerable in the community. And he held those who mistreated them to account.—**Read Exodus 22:22-24.**

<sup>23</sup> The Law also protected family members from sex crimes by forbidding all forms of incest. (Lev. 18:6-30) Unlike the people of the nations surrounding Israel, who tolerated or even condoned this practice, Jehovah’s people were to view this type of crime as Jehovah did—as a detestable act.

<sup>24</sup> **Lessons:** Jehovah wants those he places in positions of responsibility to take a loving interest in all whom they oversee. He hates sex crimes and wants to ensure that all, especially the most vulnerable, receive protection and justice.

#### THE LAW, “A SHADOW OF THE GOOD THINGS TO COME”

<sup>25</sup> Love and justice are like breath and life; on earth, one does not exist without

25-26. (a) Why can we say that love and justice are like breath and life? (b) What will we discuss in the next article in this series?

the other. When we are convinced that Jehovah is treating us justly, our love for him grows. And when we love God and love his righteous standards, we feel impelled to love others and treat them justly.

<sup>26</sup> The Mosaic Law covenant breathed life into the relationship between Jehovah and the Israelites. However, the Law was done away with after Jesus fulfilled the Law, and it was replaced with something even better. (Rom. 10:4) The apostle Paul described the Law as “a shadow of the good things to come.” (Heb. 10:1) The next article in this series will discuss some of those good things and the role that love and justice play in the Christian congregation.

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Cover:** While preparing a meal, an Israelite mother enjoys a lively conversation with her daughters. In the background, the father is training his son to care for the sheep.

**Page 24:** Elders at the city gate lovingly help a widow and her child who have been mistreated by a local merchant.

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#### HOW DOES THE MOSAIC LAW REVEAL:

- Jehovah’s love for his people?
- Jehovah’s love of justice?
- Jehovah’s view of vulnerable ones?

# A Rich Christian Heritage Allowed Me to Flourish

AS TOLD BY WOODWORTH MILLS



IN THE dead of night, the mighty Niger River stretched out before us—swift and nearly a mile (1.6 km) wide. The Nigerian Civil War was raging, so crossing the Niger could be fatal. Still we *had* to take the risk, more than once. How did I come to be in that position? Let's go back to the time before I was born.

In 1913 my father, John Mills, got baptized in New York City at the age of 25. Brother Russell gave the baptism talk. Shortly thereafter, Dad went to Trinidad, where he married Constance Farmer, a zealous Bible

Student. Dad helped his friend William R. Brown to show the “Photo-Drama of Creation.” They did so until the Browns were assigned to West Africa in 1923. Dad and Mother, who both had the heavenly hope, carried on in Trinidad.

## PARENTS WHO LOVED US

My parents had nine children, naming their firstborn Rutherford after the then president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. When I came along on December 30, 1922, I was named after Clayton J. Woodworth, editor of *The Golden Age* (now *Awake!*). Our parents gave all of us a basic education, but they especially emphasized spiritual goals. Mother had an extraordinary ability to reason persuasively from the Scriptures. Dad loved to tell us Bible stories, using his whole body to make the account come alive.

Their efforts bore good fruit. Three of us five boys attended Gilead School. Three of our sisters pioneered for many years in Trinidad and Tobago. By means of their teaching and good example, our parents planted us children “in the house of Jehovah.” Their encouragement helped us to stay there and flourish “in the courtyards of our God.”—Ps. 92:13.

Our home became a base for the preaching activity. Pioneers gathered there and often talked about Brother George Young, a Canadian missionary who had visited Trinidad. My parents spoke excitedly about their former partners, the Browns, who were by

then in West Africa. All of this moved me to begin field service when I was ten years old.

### EARLY ACTIVITIES

Our magazines were fiery in those days, exposing false religion, greedy commercialism, and dirty politics. In response, in 1936 the clergy prompted Trinidad's acting governor to ban all Watch Tower publications. We concealed the literature but continued to use it till all supplies were exhausted. We had information marches and bicycle parades, using handbills and placards. Along with the sound-car group from the town of Tunapuna, we preached even in the remotest parts of Trinidad. It was exciting! That spiritual environment led to my getting baptized at 16 years of age.

Our family heritage and these early experiences ignited in me a desire to be a missionary. That desire was still alive when I went to Aruba in 1944 and joined Brother Edmund W. Cummings. We were thrilled to gather ten people for the Memorial in 1945. The next year, the first congregation on the island was formed.

Shortly thereafter, I witnessed informally to workmate Oris Williams. Oris put up strong counterarguments to defend the doctrines she had been taught. Through a Bible study, however, she learned what God's Word really says and got baptized on January 5, 1947. In time, we fell in love and got married. She began pioneering in November 1950. With Oris my life flourished anew.

### EXHILARATING SERVICE IN NIGERIA

In 1955 we were invited to attend Gilead School. In preparation for that privilege, Oris and I resigned from our jobs, sold our home and other possessions, and said farewell to Aruba. On July 29, 1956, we graduated with the 27th class of Gilead and were assigned to Nigeria.

Looking back, Oris observed: "Jehovah's spirit can help a person to adjust to the ups and downs of missionary life. Unlike my husband, I never wanted to be a missionary. I would rather have had a home and raised children. I changed my thinking when I realized how urgent it is to preach the good news. By the time we graduated from Gilead, I was fully set to evangelize as a missionary. As we boarded the liner *Queen Mary*, Worth Thornton, from Brother Knorr's office, bid us 'Bon voyage!' He told us that we would be serving at Bethel. 'Oh, no!' I sighed. But I quickly adjusted and came to love Bethel, where I had various assignments. The one I enjoyed most was working as a receptionist. I love people, and this work brought me into direct contact with the Nigerian brothers. Many would arrive dusty, tired, thirsty, and hungry. It was a pleasure to care for their needs for refreshment and comfort. All of it was sacred service to Jehovah, and that is what brought me satisfaction and happiness." Yes, every assignment allowed us to flourish.

At a family get-together in Trinidad in 1961, Brother Brown related some of his thrilling experiences in Africa. Then I reported on our growth in Nigeria. Brother Brown lovingly put his arms around me and said to Dad: "Johnny, you never made it to Africa, but Woodworth did!" In response, Dad said: "Carry on, Worth! Carry on!" Such encouragement from those spiritual veterans deepened my desire to accomplish my ministry thoroughly.

In 1962, I was privileged to receive further training in the 37th class of Gilead, a ten-month course. Brother Wilfred Gooch, then the branch overseer in Nigeria, attended the 38th class and was assigned to England. Oversight of the Nigeria branch then became my responsibility. Following Brother Brown's example, I traveled extensively,



A



B

A The Tunapuna sound-car group

B With Oris, my life flourished anew

C William "Bible" Brown and his wife, Antonia, greatly encouraged us

D With the Bethel family in Lagos, Nigeria, 1957

E The "Men of Goodwill" International Assembly drew 121,128 people, who spoke 17 different languages, including Ibo



C



D



E

getting to know and love the dear Nigerian brothers. Though they lacked many material things common to people in more developed lands, their joy and contentment clearly demonstrated that a meaningful life is not dependent on money or material possessions. Considering their circumstances, it was marvelous to see them clean, neat, and dignified at the meetings. When they flocked to conventions, many would arrive in lorries and *bolekajas*\* (open-sided buses made locally). Often these buses bore intriguing slogans. One was: “Little drops of water make a mighty ocean.”

How true that slogan is! Every bit of individual effort counts; we added ours. By 1974, Nigeria became the first land outside the United States to reach the 100,000-publisher mark. The work had flourished!

In the midst of this growth, the Nigerian Civil War raged from 1967 to 1970. For months, our brothers on the Biafran side of the Niger River were cut off from the branch office. We just *had* to take them spiritual food. As mentioned in the introduction, with prayer and trust in Jehovah, we crossed the river several times.

I vividly remember those dangerous trips across the Niger, risking death from trigger-happy soldiers, disease, and other hazards. It was one thing to get through the lines of suspicious federal troops but frightfully worse to get through on the blockaded Biafran side. On one occasion, I crossed the rushing Niger River at night by passenger canoe from Asaba to Onitsha and went on to encourage the overseers at Enugu. Another trip strengthened the elders in the mandated blackout at Aba. In Port Harcourt, our meeting hurriedly ended with prayer when federal forces broke through Biafran defenses outside the town.

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\* See *Awake!* of March 8, 1972, pp. 24-26.

Those meetings were vital to reassure our dear brothers of Jehovah’s loving care and to give sorely needed counsel on neutrality and unity. The Nigerian brothers successfully came through that horrible conflict. They demonstrated the love that transcends tribal hatred, and they maintained Christian unity. What a privilege to be at their side in that hour of trial!

In 1969, Brother Milton G. Henschel was chairman of the “Peace on Earth” International Assembly at Yankee Stadium, New York, and I learned much as his assistant. This was timely because in 1970 we held the “Men of Goodwill” International Assembly in Lagos, Nigeria. Coming so soon after the civil war, this event succeeded only with Jehovah’s blessing. It was a record-making 17-language event, attended by 121,128. Brothers Knorr and Henschel and visitors on chartered planes from the United States and England observed one of the biggest Christian baptisms since Pentecost—3,775 new disciples! Helping to organize that event was perhaps the busiest time of my life. The growth in publishers was not just an expansion but an explosion!

During the more than 30 years in Nigeria, I enjoyed serving occasionally as a traveling overseer and as a zone overseer in West Africa. How appreciative the missionaries were to receive individual attention and encouragement! What a pleasure it was to assure them that they had not been overlooked! This work taught me that showing personal interest in people is key to helping them flourish and maintain the strength and unity of Jehovah’s organization.

It was only by Jehovah’s help that we were able to cope with the problems brought on by the civil war and illness. Jehovah’s blessing was always evident. Oris commented:

“We both had malaria several times. In one case, Worth landed in a hospital in



I loved Oris dearly throughout our 68 years of marriage

Lagos unconscious. I was told that he might not survive, but thankfully he did! When he regained consciousness, he spoke about God's Kingdom to the nurse who was keeping watch over him. Later, I went with Worth to visit the nurse, Mr. Nwambiwe, to cultivate his interest in the Bible. He accepted the truth and later became an elder in Aba. I too had success in helping many, even staunch Muslims, to become devoted servants of Jehovah. We very much enjoyed getting to know and coming to love the Nigerian people, their culture, their customs, and their language."

This was another lesson: To flourish in our foreign assignment, we had to learn to love our brothers and sisters no matter how different their culture was from ours.

### NEW ASSIGNMENTS

After serving at Bethel in Nigeria, in 1987 we received a new assignment as field missionaries on the beautiful island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean. It was a very pleasant assignment, but it presented new challenges. Unlike in Africa, where a man married *many* wives, here in St. Lucia, the problem was that a couple lived together *without marrying* honorably. God's powerful Word moved many of our Bible students to make the needed changes.

As our vigor decreased with age, the Governing Body lovingly transferred us to world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., in 2005. Daily I still thank Jehovah for Oris. She was overcome by that enemy death in 2015, and the sense of loss is unspeakable. She was a superlative companion and a loving, lovable wife. I loved her dearly throughout our 68 years together. We found that the formula for happiness, both in marriage and in the congregation, is to respect headship, forgive freely, maintain humility, and display the fruitage of the spirit.

When disappointments or discouragement threatened, we looked to Jehovah to help us keep our personal sacrifices unspoiled. As we continued to be readjusted, we saw that things kept getting better all the time—and the best is yet ahead!—Isa. 60:17; 2 Cor. 13:11.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Jehovah blessed the work of my parents and others, so that—according to the latest reports—9,892 have joined in true worship. In Aruba, many worked to strengthen the original congregation I was part of. That island now has 14 prosperous congregations. As for Nigeria, the number of publishers has increased to a mighty crowd of 381,398. And on the island of St. Lucia, 783 are supporting Jehovah's Kingdom.

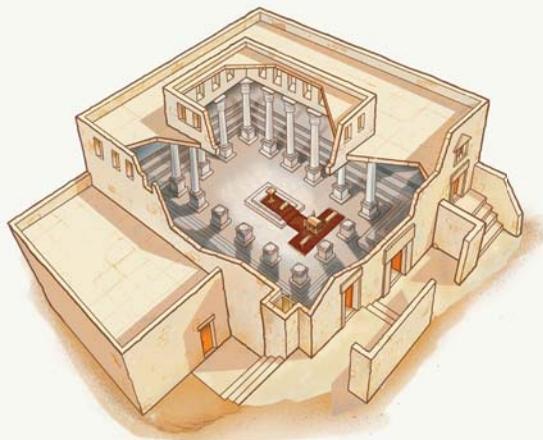
I am now in my 90's. Psalm 92:14 says of those planted in the house of Jehovah: "Even in old age they will still be thriving; they will remain vigorous and fresh." I am so grateful for the life I have lived in Jehovah's service. The rich Christian heritage I received has encouraged me to serve Jehovah fully. In his loyal love, Jehovah has allowed me to "flourish in the courtyards of [my] God."—Ps. 92:13.

## What was the origin of the synagogue?

THE word “synagogue” comes from a Greek word meaning “assembly” or “gathering together.” The name is fitting because synagogues have been places of assembly for instruction and worship in Jewish communities since ancient times. The Hebrew Scriptures make no clear reference to synagogues, but it is clear from the Christian Greek Scriptures that such gathering places were already well-established by the first century C.E.

Most scholars believe that synagogues originated during the Jewish captivity in Babylon. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* reasons: “The Exiles, deprived of the Temple, in a strange land, feeling the need for consolation in their distress, would meet from time to time, probably on Sabbaths, and read the Scriptures.” On being released from their exile, the Jews evidently continued to meet for prayer and reading of the Scriptures, and they established synagogues wherever they settled.

By the first century C.E., synagogues had thus become the focus of Jewish religious and social life for communities scattered around the Mediterranean, throughout the Middle East, and in Israel itself. “[The synagogue] served as a place for study, sacred meals, court proceedings, depositing communal funds, and political and social meetings,” says Professor Lee Levine of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He adds: “Of central importance, of course, were the religious services.” It is not surprising, then, that Jesus frequently attended gatherings at synagogues. (Mark 1:21; 6:2; Luke 4:16) There he taught, exhorted, and encouraged those present. Following the establishment of the Christian congregation, the apostle Paul likewise did much preaching in synagogues. Those interested in spiritual things were naturally drawn to the synagogue, so when entering a city, Paul usually went first to the synagogue and preached there.—Acts 17:1, 2; 18:4.



### First-Century Synagogue

This reconstruction incorporates some features of the first-century synagogue found at Gamla, located about six miles (10 km) northeast of the Sea of Galilee. It gives an idea of what an ancient synagogue may have looked like

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Jehovah wanted children to feel safe and secure as they were lovingly raised and taught by their parents (See article 9, paragraphs 7-8)

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