

MARCH 2019

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
MAY 6–JUNE 2, 2019

**SONG 52**

Christian Dedication

**PREVIEW**

The most important decision you will ever make is whether you will get baptized or not. Why is that decision so important? This article will answer that question. It will also help those who are thinking about getting baptized to overcome challenges that might be holding them back.

## What Prevents Me From Getting Baptized?

*“Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.”—ACTS 8:38.*

WHO do you think should set the standards for what is good and what is bad? When Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, they sent a clear message: They did not trust Jehovah and his standards. They chose to set their own standards of good and bad. (Gen. 3:22) But look at what they lost. They lost their friendship with Jehovah. They also lost the opportunity to live forever, and they passed sin and death on to their children. (Rom. 5:12) Adam and Eve’s choice led to misery.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the way Adam and Eve behaved with the way that the Ethiopian eunuch responded when Philip preached to him. The eunuch appreciated so much what Jehovah and Jesus had done for him that he immediately got baptized. (Acts 8:34-38) When we dedicate ourselves to God and, like that eunuch, get baptized, we send a clear message. We show that we appreciate what Jehovah and Jesus have done for us. We also show that we trust Jehovah and recognize that he is the one who should set the standard of good and bad.

<sup>3</sup> Think of the blessings we receive when we serve Jehovah! For one thing, we have the prospect of eventually gaining all that Adam and Eve lost, including the oppor-

1. What did Adam and Eve lose, and with what result?

2-3. (a) How did the Ethiopian eunuch respond when Philip preached to him? (b) What blessings do we receive by getting baptized, and what questions will we consider?

tunity to live forever. Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, Jehovah forgives our mistakes and gives us a clean conscience. (Matt. 20:28; Acts 10:43) We also become part of Jehovah’s family of approved servants with a blessed future ahead of us. (John 10:14-16; Rom. 8:20, 21) Despite these obvious benefits, though, some who have come to know Jehovah hesitate to follow the example of the Ethiopian eunuch. What might prevent them from getting baptized? And how can they overcome those challenges?

#### CHALLENGES THAT PREVENT SOME FROM GETTING BAPTIZED

**4 Lack of confidence.** Avery’s parents are Jehovah’s Witnesses. His father has an excellent reputation as a caring father and an effective elder. Yet, Avery held back from getting baptized. Why? “I did not think that I would be able to live up to my father’s reputation,” he says. Avery also lacked confidence that he would be able to handle responsibilities that he might be given in the future. “I worried about being asked to pray in public, to give talks, or to lead a group in the field service.”

**5** Hannah, aged 18, suffered from a severe lack of confidence. She was raised by parents who serve Jehovah. Even so, she doubted that she could live by Jehovah’s standards. Why? Hannah had developed a very low opinion of herself. At times, she felt so bad that she would deliberately injure herself, which only made things worse. “I never told anyone

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4-5. What challenges did a young man named Avery and a young woman named Hannah face?

about what I did, not even my parents,” she says, “and I imagined that Jehovah would never want me because of what I was doing to myself.”

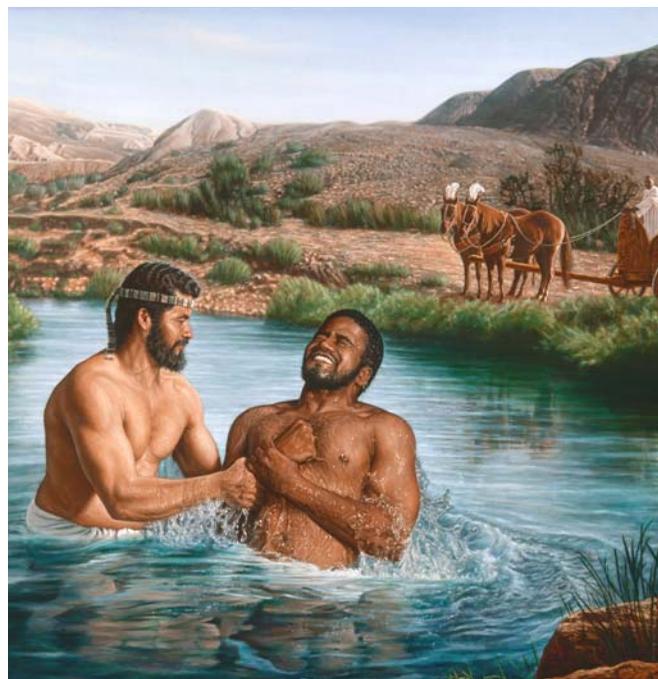
**6 Influence of friends.** Vanessa, aged 22, says, “I had a really good friend whom I had known for almost a decade.” However, Vanessa’s friend did not support Vanessa in her goal of getting baptized. That hurt Vanessa, and she says, “I find it hard to make friends, and I was worried that if I ended that relationship, I would never have another close friend.”

**7 Fear of failure.** Makayla was five years old when her brother was disfellowshipped. As she grew up, she saw

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6. What held Vanessa back from getting baptized?
  7. A young woman named Makayla was afraid of what, and why?

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After he accepted Jesus, the Ethiopian eunuch wanted to get baptized as soon as possible  
(See paragraphs 2-3)



**Challenges some face before choosing to get baptized**

(See paragraphs 4-8)



Lack of Confidence



Influence of Friends

**How you can overcome these challenges**

(See paragraphs 9-16)



the impact that her brother’s actions had on her parents. “I was afraid that if I got baptized,” says Makayla, “I would make a mistake, be disfellowshipped, and bring even more sadness to my parents.”

**8 Fear of opposition.** Miles’ father and stepmother serve Jehovah, but his mother is not a Witness. “I lived with my mother for 18 years,” says Miles, “and I was afraid to tell her that I wanted to get baptized. I had seen the way she reacted when my father became a Witness. I was afraid that she would cause trouble for me.”

**HOW CAN YOU OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES?**

**9** Adam and Eve chose not to serve Jehovah because they failed to develop a strong love for him. Even so, Jehovah allowed them to live long enough to have

- 8. What did a young man named Miles fear?
- 9. What will likely happen when you learn how loving and patient Jehovah is?

children and to set their own standards for raising those children. The results of Adam and Eve’s decision to be independent of Jehovah soon made it clear how foolish they had been. Their oldest son murdered his innocent brother, and in time violence and selfishness dominated the human family. (Gen. 4:8; 6:11-13) All the while, Jehovah had a means to save all of Adam and Eve’s children who want to serve him. (John 6:38-40, 57, 58) As you learn more about how patient and loving Jehovah is, your love for him will likely grow. You will want to reject the course that Adam and Eve chose and dedicate yourself to Jehovah.

**10 Continue learning about Jehovah.** The more you learn about Jehovah, the more confident you will become that you can serve him successfully. Avery, mentioned earlier, says: “I gained confidence by reading about and meditating on the promise found at **Psalm 19:7.**”

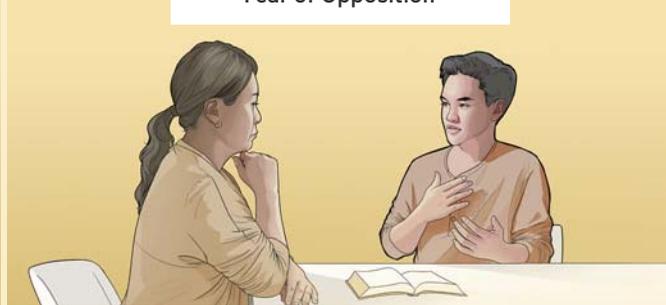
- 10. Why can meditating on Psalm 19:7 help you to serve Jehovah?



Fear of Failure



Fear of Opposition



**(Read.)** When Avery saw how Jehovah fulfilled that assurance, his love for God grew stronger. Love not only builds confidence but also helps us to focus on Jehovah and on what he wants. Hannah, mentioned earlier, says: “Through my personal Bible reading and study, I came to realize that when I hurt myself, I hurt Jehovah as well.” (1 Pet. 5:7) Hannah became a ‘doer of God’s word.’ (Jas. 1:22) With what result? She says: “When I saw how obeying Jehovah benefited me, I developed a strong love for him. Now I’m sure that Jehovah will always guide me when I need his help.” Hannah was able to overcome the urge to hurt herself. She dedicated herself to Jehovah and got baptized.

<sup>11</sup> **Choose your friends wisely.** Vanessa, mentioned earlier, eventually realized that her friend was holding her back from serving Jehovah. So she ended the friendship. But Vanessa did more. She

11. What did Vanessa do to make good friends, and what can we learn from this?

worked hard to make new friends, inside the congregation. She says that the example set by Noah and his family helped her. “They were surrounded by people who didn’t love Jehovah,” she says, “but they had good association with one another.” After she got baptized, Vanessa became a pioneer. She now says, “This has helped me to make good friends not only in my own congregation but also in other congregations.” You too can make good friends by being as involved as possible in the work that Jehovah has assigned us to do.—Matt. 24:14.

<sup>12</sup> **Have a balanced view of fear.** Some kinds of fear are good for us. For example, we need to have a healthy fear of displeasing Jehovah. (Ps. 111:10) If Adam and Eve had developed that type of fear, they would not have rebelled against Jehovah. But they did rebel. After they did so, their eyes were opened in that they became fully aware

12. What kind of fear did Adam and Eve lack, and with what result?



We can show that we appreciate what God has done for us  
(See paragraph 17)

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that they were sinners. They could only pass sin and death on to their children. Because they could see, or understand, their condition, they became ashamed of their nakedness and covered themselves.—Gen. 3:7, 21.

<sup>13</sup> While we need to have a healthy fear of Jehovah, we do not need to have a morbid fear of death. Jehovah has made a way for us to gain everlasting life. If we commit a sin but are genuinely repentant, Jehovah will overlook our mistakes. He will forgive us in line with our faith in the ransom sacrifice of his Son. A primary way we show faith is by dedicating our life to God and getting baptized.—**Read 1 Peter 3:21.**

<sup>14</sup> We have many reasons to love Jehovah. Not only does he supply the good things we enjoy each day but he also teaches us the truth about himself and

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13-14. (a) In line with 1 Peter 3:21, why do we not need to have a morbid fear of death? (b) What reasons do we have to love Jehovah?

his purposes. (John 8:31, 32) He has given us the Christian congregation to guide and support us. He helps us carry our burdens now, and he offers us the hope of living forever in perfect conditions in the future. (Ps. 68:19; Rev. 21:3, 4) When we meditate on how much Jehovah has already done to show that he loves us, we are drawn to love him. And when we love Jehovah, we gain a balanced view of fear. We fear hurting the One we have come to love so much.

<sup>15</sup> Makayla, mentioned earlier, overcame her fear of failure when she understood just how forgiving Jehovah is. “I realized that we are all imperfect and will make mistakes. But I also came to understand that Jehovah loves us and will forgive us on the basis of the ransom.” Her love for Jehovah moved her to dedicate herself to him and get baptized.

<sup>16</sup> Miles, who was afraid that his mother would oppose his decision to get baptized, sought help from the circuit overseer. “He too had grown up in a religiously divided household,” says Miles. “He helped me to think about what I could say to convince my mother that it was my decision to get baptized and that my father was not pushing me to do so.” Miles’ mother did not react well. Eventually, he had to move out of her home, but he stuck to his decision. “Learning about the good things that Jehovah has done for me touched my heart,” he says. “When I thought deeply about the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, I came to realize

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15. How did Makayla overcome her fear of failure?  
16. How was Miles helped to overcome his fear of opposition?

just how much Jehovah loves me. That thought moved me to dedicate myself to Jehovah and get baptized.”

### STICK TO YOUR DECISION

<sup>17</sup> When Eve ate of the fruit from that tree in Eden, she rejected her Father. When Adam joined her, he displayed a callous lack of appreciation for all the good that Jehovah had done for him. We all have the opportunity to show just how much we disagree with the decision that Adam and Eve made. By getting baptized, we show Jehovah that we believe that he has the authority to set the standard of what is right and what is wrong for us. We prove that we love our Father and trust in him.

<sup>18</sup> The challenge we face after baptism is to live each day by Jehovah’s standards, not our own. Millions of people are living that way each year. You can be like them if you continue to deepen your understanding of God’s Word, the Bible; associate regularly with your brothers and sisters; and zealously share what you have learned about your loving Father.

17. What opportunity do we have?

18. How can you succeed in serving Jehovah?

(Heb. 10:24, 25) When you make decisions, listen to the advice Jehovah gives you through his Word and his organization. (Isa. 30:21) Then all you do will be successful.—Prov. 16:3, 20.

<sup>19</sup> When you continue to recognize how much you benefit from Jehovah’s guidance, your love for him and his standards will grow. Then nothing Satan offers you will entice you away from serving Jehovah. Imagine yourself a thousand years from now. You will look back on your decision to get baptized as the best decision you ever made!

19. What should you continue to recognize, and why?

### PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Pages 4-5: Confidence:

A young man is nervous about commenting, so he enhances his personal study. **Friends:** A young Witness with a bad associate is embarrassed when she sees fellow Witnesses. She learns to be proud to be a Witness. **Failure:** When her brother is disfellowshipped and leaves home, a young girl is concerned that she too might fail. But she makes the truth her own and gets baptized.

**Opposition:** A boy is nervous about praying while his unbelieving mother looks on. Later, he courageously explains his beliefs to her.

### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

■ What do we gain by getting baptized?

■ What challenges do some face?

■ What will help us to succeed in serving Jehovah?

**SONG 89**

Listen, Obey,  
and Be Blessed

**PREVIEW**

When Jesus was on earth, Jehovah spoke from heaven on three occasions. On one of those occasions, Jehovah urged Christ's disciples to listen to his Son. Today, Jehovah speaks to us by means of his written Word, which includes the teachings of Jesus, as well as by means of his organization. This article will consider how we benefit from listening to Jehovah and to Jesus.

## Listen to Jehovah's Voice

*“This is my Son . . . Listen to him.”*—MATT. 17:5.

JEHOVAH loves to communicate with us. In the past, he used prophets, angels, and his Son, Christ Jesus, to convey his thoughts to us. (Amos 3:7; Gal. 3:19; Rev. 1:1) Today, he communicates with us through his Word, the Bible. He gave it to us so that we can learn his thinking and understand his ways.

<sup>2</sup> When Jesus was on earth, Jehovah spoke from heaven on three occasions. Let us consider what Jehovah said, what we can learn from his words, and how we benefit from what he said.

### “YOU ARE MY SON, THE BELOVED”

<sup>3</sup> **Mark 1:9-11** records the first occasion when Jehovah spoke from heaven. **(Read.)** He said: “You are my Son, the beloved; I have approved you.” How it must have touched Jesus' heart to hear his Father's voice expressing love and reassurance to him! Jehovah's words confirmed three important facts about Jesus. First, Jesus is his Son. Second, Jehovah loves his Son. And third, Jehovah has approved his Son. Let us look at each one closely.

<sup>4</sup> **“You are my Son.”** With these words, Jehovah indicated that his beloved Son, Jesus, had entered into a new relationship with Him. While Jesus was in heaven, he

1-2. (a) How has Jehovah communicated with humans? (b) What will we consider in this article?

3. As we read at Mark 1:9-11, what did Jehovah say when Jesus got baptized, and what important facts did those words confirm?

4. What new relationship with God did Jesus enter into at his baptism?

was a spirit son of God. However, at his baptism, he was anointed by holy spirit. At that time, God indicated that Jesus as His anointed Son now had the hope of returning to heaven to become God’s appointed King and High Priest. (Luke 1: 31-33; Heb. 1:8, 9; 2:17) So at Jesus’ baptism, his Father had good reason to say: “You are my Son.”—Luke 3:22.

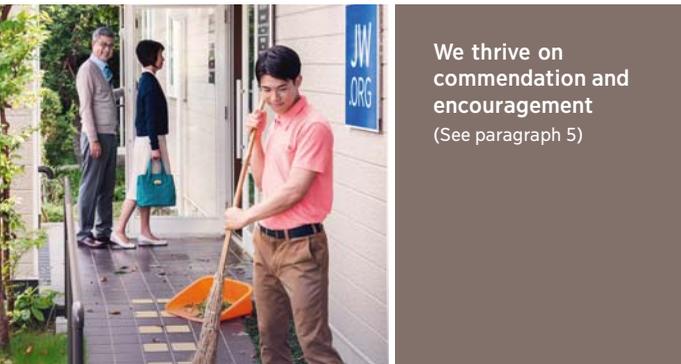
<sup>5</sup> **“You are . . . the beloved.”** Jehovah’s example in expressing love and approval reminds us to look for opportunities to encourage others. (John 5: 20) We blossom when someone we care about shows love to us and commends us for the good we do. Likewise, our brothers and sisters in the congregation and our family members need our

5. How can we imitate Jehovah’s example in expressing love and approval?

love and encouragement. When we commend others, we strengthen their faith and help them to serve Jehovah loyally. Parents especially need to encourage their children. When parents commend their children sincerely and show them affection, they help their children to flourish.

<sup>6</sup> **“I have approved you.”** These words show that Jehovah was confident that Jesus would faithfully carry out his Father’s will. Jehovah has such confidence in his Son, so we can likewise be completely confident that Jesus will faithfully carry out all of Jehovah’s promises. (2 Cor. 1:20) When we consider Jesus’ example, we are even more determined to learn from him and to follow in his footsteps. Jehovah is

6. Why can we have confidence in Jesus Christ?



We thrive on  
commendation and  
encouragement  
(See paragraph 5)



equally confident that, as a group, his servants will continue to learn from his Son.—1 Pet. 2:21.

#### “LISTEN TO HIM”

<sup>7</sup> **Read Matthew 17:1-5.** The second time Jehovah spoke from heaven was when Jesus “was transfigured.” Jesus had invited Peter, James, and John to accompany him up into a high mountain. While there, they saw a remarkable vision. Jesus’ face shone brightly and his clothes glistened. Two figures, representing Moses and Elijah, began talking to Jesus about his coming death and resurrection. Although the three apostles were “weighed down with sleep,” they saw this amazing vision when they were fully awake. (Luke 9:29-32) Next, a bright cloud covered them, and they heard a voice from the cloud—God’s voice! As at Jesus’ baptism, Jehovah expressed his approval of his Son and his love for him, saying: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.” But this time Jehovah added: “Listen to him.”

<sup>8</sup> The vision gave a preview of Jesus’ future glory and power as King of God’s Kingdom. No doubt, Christ was encouraged and fortified for the sufferings and painful death he would endure. The vision also built up the disciples’ faith and strengthened them for the tests of integrity and years of hard work that lay ahead. Some 30 years later, the apostle

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7. According to Matthew 17:1-5, on which occasion did Jehovah speak from heaven, and what did he say?

8. What effect did the vision have on Jesus and the disciples?

Peter referred to the vision of the transfiguration, showing that the vision was still vivid in his mind.—2 Pet. 1:16-18.

<sup>9</sup> **“Listen to him.”** Jehovah made it clear that he wants us to listen to his Son’s words and obey them. What did Jesus say when he was on earth? He said many things worth listening to! For example, he lovingly taught his followers how to preach the good news, and he repeatedly reminded them to keep on the watch. (Matt. 24:42; 28:19, 20) He also urged them to exert themselves vigorously, and he encouraged them not to give up. (Luke 13:24) Jesus stressed the need for his followers to love one another, to remain united, and to observe his commandments. (John 15:10, 12, 13) What practical counsel Jesus gave his disciples! That counsel is just as valid today as it was when Jesus gave it.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said: “Everyone who is on the side of the truth listens to my voice.” (John 18:37) We show that we are listening to his voice when we “continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely.” (Col. 3:13; Luke 17:3, 4) We further show that we are listening to his voice by zealously preaching the good news “in favorable times and difficult times.”—2 Tim. 4:2.

<sup>11</sup> Jesus said: “My sheep listen to my voice.” (John 10:27) Christ’s followers show that they listen to Jesus by not only paying attention to his words but also acting on them. They are not distracted by the “anxieties of life.” (Luke

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9. What practical counsel did Jesus give his disciples?

10-11. How can we show that we are listening to Jesus?



Our ministry helps us stay focused  
(See paragraph 12)

21:34) Rather, they make obeying Jesus' commands a priority in life, even in the face of challenging circumstances. Many of our brothers are enduring severe trials, including attacks by opposers, extreme poverty, and natural disasters. Through it all, they remain faithful to Jehovah, cost what it may. To them, Jesus gives the following assurance: "Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. In turn, whoever loves me will be loved by my Father."—John 14:21.

<sup>12</sup> Here is another way we can show that we are listening to Jesus: by cooperating with those whom he has appointed to take the lead among us. (Heb. 13:7, 17) God's organization has made many adjustments in recent years, including the use of new tools and methods in our ministry, the format of our midweek meeting, and the way we build, renovate, and maintain our Kingdom Halls. How we appreciate the loving and carefully thought-out guidance! We can be

12. What is another way we can show that we are listening to Jesus?

sure that Jehovah will bless our efforts to follow the organization's timely direction.

<sup>13</sup> We benefit from listening to all the things Jesus taught. Jesus assured his disciples that his teachings would refresh them. "You will find refreshment for yourselves," he said. "For my yoke is kindly, and my load is light." (Matt. 11:28-30) God's Word, which includes the four Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and ministry, refreshes us, restores our spiritual strength, and makes us wise. (Ps. 19:7; 23:3) Jesus stated: "Happy are those hearing the word of God and keeping it!"—Luke 11:28.

#### 'I WILL GLORIFY MY NAME'

<sup>14</sup> **Read John 12:27, 28.** The Gospel of John records a third occasion on which Jehovah spoke from heaven. A few days before his death, Jesus was in Jerusalem to celebrate his last Passover. "I am

13. What are the benefits of listening to Jesus?

14-15. (a) What was the third occasion, related at John 12:27, 28, on which Jehovah spoke from heaven? (b) Why would Jehovah's words have comforted and strengthened Jesus?



Jehovah will glorify his name and deliver his people  
(See paragraph 16)

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troubled,” he said. Then he prayed: “Father, glorify your name.” In response, his Father spoke from heaven: “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.”

<sup>15</sup> Jesus was troubled because of the great responsibility he had to remain faithful to Jehovah. Jesus was aware that he was going to suffer a brutal scourging and a cruel death. (Matt. 26: 38) More than all else, Jesus wanted to glorify his Father’s name. Jesus was charged with blasphemy, and he was concerned that his death would bring reproach on God. How reassuring Jehovah’s words must have been to Jesus! He could be sure that Jehovah’s name

would be glorified. His Father’s words must have done much to comfort Jesus and strengthen him for what was to come. Although Jesus may have been the only one present who understood what his Father said at that time, Jehovah made sure that His words were recorded for all of us.—John 12:29, 30.

<sup>16</sup> Like Jesus, we too may be concerned about reproach brought on Jehovah’s name. Perhaps like Jesus, we are victims of unjust treatment. Or we may be disturbed by false stories that opposers spread about us. We may think about

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16. Why may we at times be concerned about the reproach on God’s name?

the reproach these reports bring on Jehovah's name and his organization. At such times, Jehovah's words are of great comfort to us. We need not be unduly anxious. We can be sure that "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard [our] hearts and [our] mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:6, 7) Jehovah will never fail to glorify his name. By means of the Kingdom, he will reverse all the damage that Satan and this world bring on His faithful servants.—Ps. 94:22, 23; Isa. 65:17.

#### BENEFIT FROM JEHOVAH'S VOICE TODAY

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah is still speaking to us today. **(Read Isaiah 30:21.)** True, we do not hear God speak to us from heaven. He has, however, provided his written Word, the Bible, in which he gives us instruction. Additionally, Jehovah's spirit moves "the faithful steward" to keep giving His servants their food supply. (Luke 12:42) What an abundance of spiritual food we receive in the form of printed and online material, videos, and audio publications!

17. In line with Isaiah 30:21, how does Jehovah speak to us today?

<sup>18</sup> Let us keep in mind the words that Jehovah spoke when his Son was on earth! May God's own words, as recorded in the Bible, give us confidence that Jehovah has everything under control and that he will reverse any damage brought on us by Satan and his wicked world. And may we be determined to listen intently to Jehovah's voice. If we do, we will successfully endure whatever problems we now face and any challenges that are yet to come. The Bible reminds us: "You need endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the fulfillment of the promise."—Heb. 10:36.

18. How do Jehovah's words build your faith and give you courage?

**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 9:** An elder notices a ministerial servant helping to maintain the Kingdom Hall and working at the literature counter. The elder offers warm commendation. **Page 11:** A couple in Sierra Leone give a meeting invitation to a local fisherman. **Page 12:** Witnesses in a country where our work is restricted meet in a private home. They are dressed casually to avoid drawing attention to themselves.

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#### EXPLAIN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM JEHOVAH'S WORDS FOUND AT . . .

■ Mark 1:11

■ Matthew 17:5

■ John 12:28

**SONG 90**

Encourage One Another

**PREVIEW**

Jehovah and Jesus are concerned about the feelings of others. This article will consider what we can learn from their examples. We will also discuss why we need to show fellow feeling and how we can do so.

## Show Concern for the Feelings of Others

*“All of you have . . . fellow feeling.”*—1 PETER 3:8.

WE ENJOY being around people who care about our feelings and welfare. They try to put themselves in our place, to discern what we are thinking and feeling. They anticipate our needs and offer help—sometimes even before we ask for it. We appreciate people who show that they have “fellow feeling”<sup>\*</sup> for us.—**Read 1 Peter 3:8.**

<sup>2</sup> As Christians, we all want to show empathy, or fellow feeling. Realistically, though, we may need to work at it. Why? For one thing, we are imperfect. (Rom. 3:23) So we must fight the inborn tendency to think mainly of ourselves. Also, some of us may struggle to show empathy because of our upbringing or past circumstances. Finally, we could be influenced by the attitude of people around us. In these last days, many do not consider the feelings of others. Rather, they are “lovers of themselves.” (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) What can help us overcome these challenges to our showing concern for the feelings of others?

<sup>3</sup> We can improve in showing fellow feeling by imitating Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus Christ. Jehovah is a God of love, and he sets the best example in showing concern for others. (1 John 4:8) Jesus perfectly imitated his Fa-

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**\* EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED:** To show “fellow feeling” means to try to understand what others are feeling and to feel the same way ourselves. (Rom. 12:15) In this article, “fellow feeling” and “concern” mean the same thing.

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1. In line with 1 Peter 3:8, why do we enjoy being around people who care about our feelings and welfare?
2. Why may we need to work at showing empathy?
3. (a) How can we improve in showing fellow feeling? (b) What will we consider in this article?

ther's personality. (John 14:9) While on earth, he demonstrated how a human can show compassion. In this article, we will first consider how Jehovah and Jesus have shown concern for the feelings of others. Then we will consider how we can imitate their examples.

#### JEHOVAH'S EXAMPLE OF CONCERN FOR OTHERS

<sup>4</sup> The Bible teaches that Jehovah cares about the feelings of his servants. For example, consider how Jehovah felt when the ancient Israelites went through trials. "During all their distress it was distressing to him," says God's Word. **(Read Isaiah 63:7-9.)** Later, through the prophet Zechariah, Jehovah declared that when his people are mistreated, he takes it personally. Jehovah told his servants: "Whoever touches you touches the pupil of my eye." (Zech. 2:8) What a powerful image of the concern Jehovah has for his people!

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4. How does Isaiah 63:7-9 show that Jehovah cares about the feelings of his servants?

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah does more than just *feel compassion* for his servants who suffer. He *takes action* to help them. For example, when the Israelites were suffering as slaves in Egypt, Jehovah understood their pain and felt moved to relieve it. Jehovah said to Moses: "I have certainly seen the affliction of my people . . . , and I have heard their outcry . . . I well know the pains they suffer. I will go down to rescue them out of the hand of the Egyptians." (Ex. 3:7, 8) Because Jehovah felt compassion for his people, he freed them from slavery. Centuries later, in the Promised Land, the Israelites faced enemy attacks. How did Jehovah respond? He "was moved to pity over their groaning caused by those who oppressed them and those who were treating them abusively." Again, empathy moved Jehovah to help his people. He sent judges to save the Israelites from their enemies. —Judg. 2:16, 18.

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5. Give an example of how Jehovah has taken action to help his servants who suffer.

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Jehovah compassionately freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt  
(See paragraph 5)



<sup>6</sup> Jehovah shows consideration for the feelings of his people—even when their thinking is not always sound. Consider the case of Jonah. God sent this prophet to proclaim a message of judgment against the Ninevites. When they repented, God chose to spare them. However, Jonah was not happy about this outcome. He “became hot with anger” because his prophecy of doom did not come true. But Jehovah was patient with Jonah and helped him to adjust his thinking. (Jonah 3:10–4:11) In time, Jonah got the point, and he was even used by Jehovah to record this account for our benefit.—Rom. 15:4.\*

<sup>7</sup> Jehovah’s dealings with his people assure us that he has empathy for his servants. He is aware of the pain and suffering of each one of us. Jehovah “truly know[s] the human heart.” (2 Chron. 6:30) He understands our intimate thoughts, our deepest emotions, and our limitations. And “he will not let [us] be tempted beyond what [we] can bear.” (1 Cor. 10:13) How comforting that assurance is!

### JESUS’ EXAMPLE OF CONCERN FOR OTHERS

<sup>8</sup> As a human on earth, Jesus had deep concern for others. At least three factors

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\* Jehovah also responded with compassion to other faithful individuals’ strong emotions. Think of the accounts about Hannah (1 Sam. 1:10-20), Elijah (1 Ki. 19:1-18), and Ebed-melech (Jer. 38:7-13; 39:15-18).

6. Give an example of how Jehovah showed regard for the feelings of someone whose thinking was not sound.

7. Jehovah’s dealings with his servants assure us of what?

8-10. What factors must have contributed to Jesus’ concern for others?

must have contributed to his concern. First, as noted earlier, *Jesus perfectly reflected his heavenly Father’s personality*. Like his Father, Jesus loved people. Although he rejoiced over everything he had helped Jehovah make, Jesus “was especially fond of the sons of men.” (Prov. 8:31) Love moved Jesus to care about the feelings of others.

<sup>9</sup> Second, like Jehovah, *Jesus could read hearts*. He could know people’s motives and feelings. (Matt. 9:4; John 13:10, 11) So when Jesus discerned that people were brokenhearted, concern moved him to provide comfort.—Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:17-21.

<sup>10</sup> Third, *Jesus himself experienced some of the challenges people faced*. For example, Jesus apparently grew up in a poor family. From working with his adoptive father, Joseph, Jesus learned how to do hard physical work. (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3) It seems that Joseph died sometime before the end of Jesus’ ministry. So Jesus likely felt the pain of losing a loved one in death. And Jesus knew what it was like to be in a family with differing religious views. (John 7:5) Those circumstances and others would have helped Jesus to understand the challenges and feelings of ordinary people.

<sup>11</sup> Jesus’ concern was especially evident when he performed miracles. Jesus did not perform miracles out of a mere sense of duty. He was “moved with pity” for those who were suffering. (Matt. 20:29-34; Mark 1:40-42) For example, imagine Jesus’ feelings as he

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11. When was Jesus’ concern especially evident? Explain. (See cover picture.)

took a man away from the crowd and healed his deafness or as he resurrected the only son of a widow. (Mark 7:32-35; Luke 7:12-15) Jesus sympathized with those people and wanted to help them.

<sup>12</sup> Jesus showed fellow feeling for Martha and Mary. When he saw their grief over the death of their brother, Lazarus, “Jesus gave way to tears.” **(Read John 11:32-35.)** He did not weep just because he had lost the company of a close friend. After all, he knew that he was going to resurrect Lazarus. Rather, Jesus wept because he understood and was touched by the heartache of his dear friends.

<sup>13</sup> We benefit greatly from learning about Jesus’ fellow feeling. Of course, we are not perfect as he was. Yet, we love him for the way he treated others. (1 Pet. 1:8) We are encouraged to know that he is now ruling as King of God’s Kingdom. He will soon eliminate all suffering. He is in the best position to help humanity recover from the wounds inflicted by Satan’s rulership, for Jesus too was once human. Indeed, we are blessed to have a Ruler who can “sympathize with our weaknesses.”—Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15, 16.

#### IMITATE THE EXAMPLE SET BY JEHOVAH AND JESUS

<sup>14</sup> When we consider the example set by Jehovah and Jesus, we ourselves feel

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12. How does John 11:32-35 show Jesus’ fellow feeling for Martha and Mary?

13. How are we encouraged by knowing about Jesus’ fellow feeling?

14. In view of Ephesians 5:1, 2, what do we feel moved to do?

moved to try to show greater fellow feeling. **(Read Ephesians 5:1, 2.)** We cannot read hearts as they do. Even so, we can try to understand the emotions and needs of others. (2 Cor. 11:29) Unlike the selfish world around us, we strive to “look out not only for [our] own interests, but also for the interests of others.”—Phil. 2:4.

<sup>15</sup> Congregation elders in particular need to show fellow feeling. They know that they are accountable for the sheep entrusted to their care. (Heb. 13:17) To help their fellow believers, elders need to be understanding. How can elders demonstrate fellow feeling?

<sup>16</sup> A sympathetic elder spends time with his Christian brothers and sisters. He asks questions and then listens attentively and patiently. That is especially important if one of these dear sheep wants to pour out his heart but struggles to find the right words. (Prov. 20:5) By willingly giving of his time, an elder forms strong bonds of trust, friendship, and love with his brothers.—Acts 20:37.

<sup>17</sup> Many brothers and sisters say that the quality they most value in congregation elders is their concern for the feelings of others. Why? “It is easier to talk to them because you know that they will understand you,” says Adelaide. She adds: “You can discern that they have fellow feeling for you by the way they respond when you talk with them.” A brother recalls appreciatively: “I saw

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15. Who in particular need to show fellow feeling?

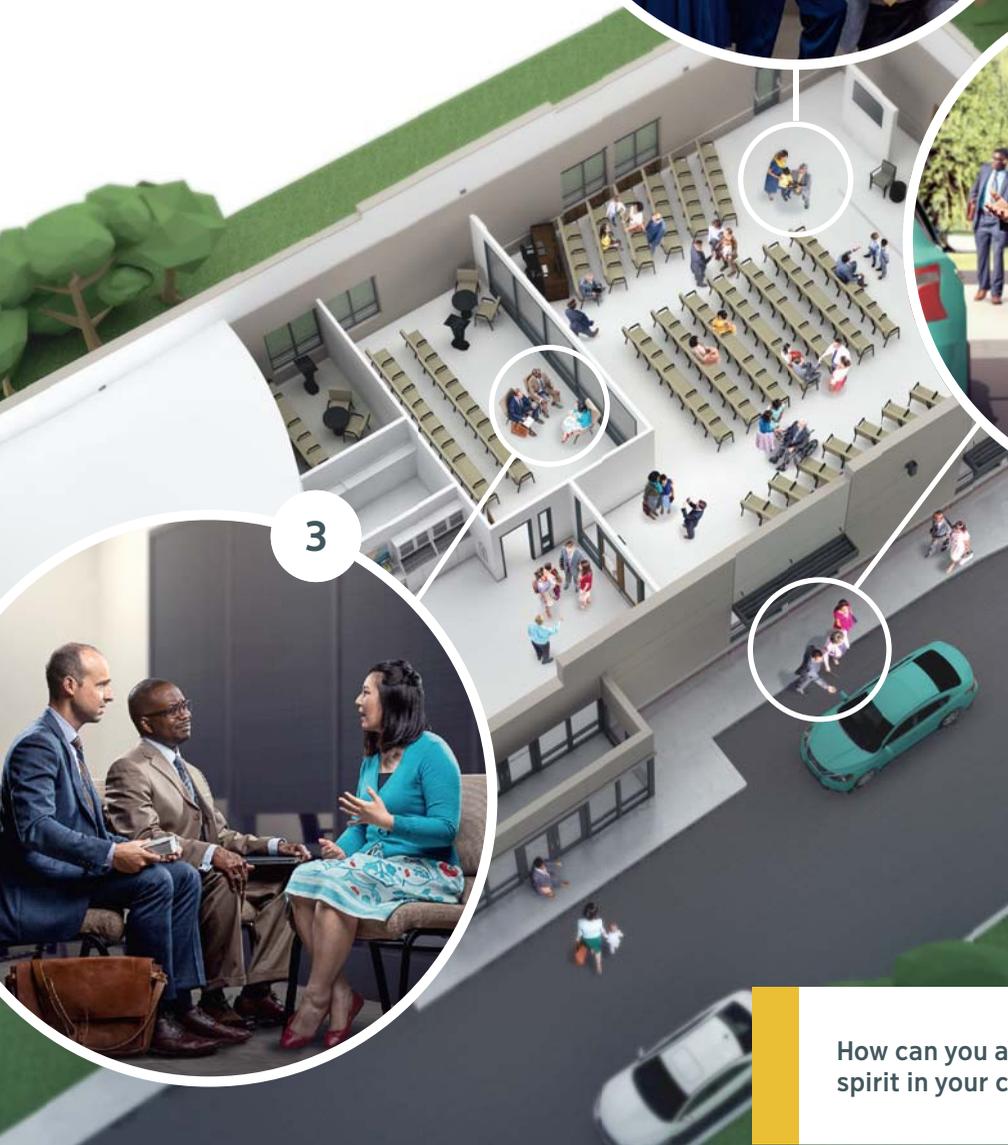
16. What does a sympathetic elder do, and why is this important?

17. What do many brothers and sisters say that they most value in elders? Give an example.

# Our congregations thrive when we show fellow feeling

(See paragraphs 15-19)

In congregations around the world, you will find examples of Jehovah's people caring for one another. What examples of fellow feeling can you see here?



How can you add to the loving spirit in your congregation?

tears well up in the eyes of one elder as he contemplated my situation. That image will always remain in my mind.” —Rom. 12:15.

<sup>18</sup> Of course, elders are not the only ones who need to show fellow feeling. All of us can develop this quality. How? Try to understand what family members and fellow believers are going through. Take an interest in the teenagers in the congregation as well as in the sick, the elderly, and those who have lost loved ones in death. Ask how they are doing. Really listen as they express themselves. Help them sense that you truly understand what they are dealing with. Offer to help in whatever way you can. When we do this, we show genuine love in action.—1 John 3:18.

<sup>19</sup> We need to be flexible when trying to help others. Why? Because people react to hardship in different ways. Some are eager to talk, while others are more re-

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18. How can we develop fellow feeling for others?

19. Why do we need to be flexible when trying to help others?

served. So we want to offer help, but we should avoid asking questions that are too personal. (1 Thess. 4:11) Even when others do open up, we may find that we do not always share their point of view. Yet, we need to recognize that this is how *they* feel. We want to be quick to listen and slow to speak.—Matt. 7:1; Jas. 1:19.

<sup>20</sup> Besides showing fellow feeling in the congregation, we want to show this beautiful quality in our ministry. How can we display fellow feeling when making disciples? We will consider that in the following article.

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20. What will we consider in the following article?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 18:** Meetings at the Kingdom Hall offer many opportunities for warm fellowship. We see (1) an elder kindly talking to a young publisher and his mother, (2) a father and his daughter helping an older sister to the car, and (3) two elders listening attentively to a sister seeking guidance.

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- How has Jehovah shown concern for the feelings of others?
- How did Jesus show concern for the feelings of others?
- How can we show fellow feeling?

**SONG 70**

Search Out  
Deserving Ones

**PREVIEW**

When we show fellow feeling, we can increase our joy—and often our results—in the ministry. Why is that so? In this article, we will consider what we can learn from Jesus' example, as well as four specific ways that we can show fellow feeling for those whom we meet in the preaching work.

## Show Fellow Feeling in Your Ministry

*“He was moved with pity for them . . . And he started to teach them many things.”—MARK 6:34.*

ONE of the most heartwarming aspects of Jesus' personality is his ability to understand the challenges that we imperfect humans face. While on earth, Jesus was able to “rejoice with those who rejoice” and “weep with those who weep.” (Rom. 12:15) For example, when his 70 disciples returned with joy after completing a successful preaching assignment, Jesus “became overjoyed in the holy spirit.” (Luke 10:17-21) On the other hand, when he saw the effect that the death of Lazarus had on those who loved him, Jesus “groaned within himself and became troubled.”—John 11:33.

<sup>2</sup> What enabled this perfect man to be so merciful and compassionate in his dealings with sinful humans? First of all, Jesus loved people. As mentioned in the preceding article, he was “especially fond of the sons of men.” (Prov. 8:31) That love for people moved him to become thoroughly acquainted with the way humans think. The apostle John explains: “He knew what was in man.” (John 2:25) Jesus had tender feelings for others. People sensed his love for them and responded favorably to the Kingdom message. The more we develop similar tender feelings for people, the more effective we will be in accomplishing our ministry.—2 Tim. 4:5.

<sup>3</sup> The apostle Paul knew that he had an obligation to preach, and so do we. (1 Cor. 9:16) However, if we have

1. What is one of the most heartwarming aspects of Jesus' personality? Explain.
2. What enabled Jesus to show fellow feeling for people?
- 3-4. (a) If we have fellow feeling, how will we view our ministry?  
(b) What will we consider in this article?

fellow feeling, we will view our ministry as more than just an obligation. We will want to prove that we care about people and are eager to help them. We know that “there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.” (Acts 20:35) The more we view our ministry with that in mind, the more we will enjoy it.

<sup>4</sup> In this article, we will consider how to show fellow feeling in our ministry. First, we will see what we can learn from the way Jesus felt about people. Then, we will consider four ways that we can imitate his example.—1 Pet. 2:21.

#### JESUS SHOWED FELLOW FEELING IN THE MINISTRY

<sup>5</sup> Consider an example of how Jesus showed fellow feeling. On one occasion, Jesus and his disciples had been preaching the good news tirelessly. They had

5-6. (a) To whom did Jesus show fellow feeling?  
(b) Why did Jesus feel pity for the people to whom he preached, as foretold at Isaiah 61:1, 2?

not had “time even to eat a meal.” So Jesus took his disciples to “an isolated place to be by themselves” and “rest up a little.” However, a large crowd ran ahead to where Jesus and his disciples were going. When Jesus got there and saw the people, how did he react? “He was moved with pity\* for them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd. And he started to teach them many things.”—Mark 6: 30-34.

<sup>6</sup> Note the reason why Jesus felt pity, which can reflect fellow feeling. He observed that the people “were as sheep without a shepherd.” Maybe Jesus saw that some of them were poor and were working long hours to provide for their families. Perhaps others were dealing with the loss of a loved one. If so, Jesus could likely relate to their situation. As

\* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** As used in this context, **pity** means to have tender feelings for someone who is suffering or who has been treated harshly. Such feelings may move a person to do whatever he can to help people.

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**Fellow feeling moved Jesus to preach a message of comfort**

(See paragraphs 5-6)



discussed in the preceding article, Jesus may have faced some of these problems himself. Jesus was concerned about others, and he felt moved to bring them a message of comfort.—**Read Isaiah 61: 1, 2.**

<sup>7</sup> What do we learn from Jesus' example? Like Jesus, we are surrounded by people who are “as sheep without a shepherd.” They struggle with many problems. We have what they need—the Kingdom message. (Rev. 14:6) So in imitation of our Master, we preach the good news because we “have pity on the lowly and the poor.” (Ps. 72:13) We feel for people, and we want to do something to help them.

#### HOW WE CAN EXPRESS FELLOW FEELING

<sup>8</sup> What can help us show fellow feeling to those to whom we preach? We want to put ourselves in the place of those we meet in the ministry and treat them as we would like to be treated.\* (Matt. 7:12) Let us consider four specific ways we can do that. First, **consider the needs of each individual.** When we preach the good news, our role is similar to that of a doctor. A good doctor considers the needs of each patient. He asks questions and listens carefully as the patient describes his condition or symptoms. Instead of prescribing the first treatment he can think of, the doctor may let time go by so that he can

\* See the article “Follow the Golden Rule in Your Ministry” in the May 15, 2014, issue of *The Watchtower*.

7. How can we imitate Jesus' example?
8. What is one way we can show fellow feeling in the ministry? Illustrate.



Consider the needs of each individual  
(See paragraphs 8-9)

observe a patient's symptoms and then offer the right treatment. Similarly, we should not try to use the same approach with everyone we meet in our ministry. Rather, we take into consideration the specific circumstances and viewpoints of each individual.

<sup>9</sup> When you meet someone in the ministry, do not assume that you know what his circumstances are or what he believes and why he believes it. (Prov. 18:13) Rather, draw the person out with tactful questions. (Prov. 20:5) If it is appropriate in your culture, ask about his work, his family, his background, and his viewpoints. When we draw others out, we in effect allow them to tell us why they need the good news. Once we know that, we can show fellow feeling for their specific needs and respond accordingly, just as Jesus did.—Compare 1 Corinthians 9: 19-23.

9. What should we not assume? Explain.

Imagine what life may be like for someone to whom you give a witness

(See paragraphs 10-11)



It may take time for some to progress spiritually

(See paragraphs 12-13)

<sup>10</sup> Second, **try to imagine what their life may be like.** In some ways, we can relate to their situation. After all, we are not immune to the problems that all imperfect humans face. (1 Cor. 10:13) We know that life in this present system can be very difficult. We endure only with Jehovah’s help. (**Read 2 Corinthians 4: 7, 8.**) But think of those who struggle to survive in this world without a close friendship with Jehovah. Like Jesus, we feel pity for them, and we are moved to bring them “good news of something better.”—Isa. 52:7.

<sup>11</sup> Consider the example of a brother named Sergey. Before learning the truth, Sergey was very withdrawn. He struggled to express himself. In time, he accepted a Bible study. “As I studied the Bible, I learned that Christians have an obli-

10-11. In harmony with 2 Corinthians 4:7, 8, what is a second way we can show fellow feeling? Give an example.

gation to share their faith with others,” says Sergey. “I sincerely believed that I could never do that.” Still, he thought of those who had not yet heard the truth, and he could only imagine what their life without knowing Jehovah was like. “The new things I was learning brought me great happiness and inner peace,” he says. “I knew that others needed to learn these truths too.” As Sergey’s fellow feeling increased, so did his courage to preach. “To my great surprise,” says Sergey, “telling others about the Bible actually boosted my self-confidence. It also strengthened these new beliefs in my own heart.”\*

<sup>12</sup> Third, **be patient with those whom you teach.** Remember, they may never have considered some of the Bible truths we know very well. And many

\* See *The Watchtower*, August 1, 2011, pp. 21-22.

12-13. Why do we need to be patient with those whom we teach in the ministry? Illustrate.

have a strong emotional connection to their current beliefs. They may see their religious views as uniting them with their family, their culture, and their community. How can we help them?

<sup>13</sup> Think of this comparison: What happens when an old, rickety bridge needs to be replaced? Often, a new bridge is constructed while the old bridge is still in use. Once the new bridge is ready, the old one can be torn down. Likewise, before we ask people to give up their cherished “old” beliefs, we may first need to help them build a strong appreciation for “new” truths—Bible teachings that at the outset are unfamiliar to them. Only then will they be ready to abandon their former viewpoint. It may take time to help people make such changes.—Rom. 12:2.

<sup>14</sup> If we are patient with people in the ministry, we will not expect them to un-

14-15. How can we help those who know little or nothing about the hope of everlasting life on a paradise earth? Give an example.



A small act of kindness, such as sending an encouraging letter, may do much good (See paragraphs 16-17)

derstand or accept Bible truth the first time they hear it. Rather, fellow feeling moves us to help them reason on the Scriptures over a period of time. As an example, consider how we might reason with someone about the hope of everlasting life on a paradise earth. Many know little or nothing about this teaching. They may believe that death is the end of it all. Or they may think that all good people go to heaven. How can we help them?

<sup>15</sup> One brother relates an approach that he finds effective. First, he reads Genesis 1:28. Then, he asks the householder where and in what conditions God wanted the human family to live. Most people answer, “On earth, in good conditions.” Next, the brother reads Isaiah 55:11 and asks whether God’s purpose has changed. Often, the householder will answer no. Finally, the brother reads Psalm 37:10, 11 and asks what mankind’s future will be like. Using this Scriptural reasoning, he has helped a number of people to understand that God still wants good people to live forever in Paradise on earth.

<sup>16</sup> Fourth, **look for practical ways to show consideration.** For example, have we called at a time that seems to be inconvenient for the householder? We can apologize and offer to return at a better time. What if a householder needs help with a minor task? Or what if someone who is homebound needs someone to run an errand? In such cases, we may be able to help the person.—**Read Proverbs 3:27.**

16-17. Bearing in mind Proverbs 3:27, what are some practical ways that we can show fellow feeling? Illustrate.

<sup>17</sup> One sister had good results from a seemingly small act of kindness. Moved by fellow feeling, she wrote a letter to a family who had lost a child in death. The letter included some comfort from the Scriptures. How did the family respond? “I was having a horrible day yesterday,” wrote the bereaved mother. “I don’t think you have any idea what impact your letter had on us. I can’t thank you enough or even begin to describe how much it meant to us. I must have read your letter at least 20 times yesterday. I just could not believe how kind, caring, and uplifting it was. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.” Without doubt, we can experience good results when we put ourselves in the place of those who suffer and then do something to help them.

#### KEEP A BALANCED VIEW OF YOUR ROLE

<sup>18</sup> Of course, we want to keep a balanced view of our role in the ministry. We can play a part in helping others learn

18. In line with 1 Corinthians 3:6, 7, what balanced view do we want to keep?

about God, but we do not play the most important part. **(Read 1 Corinthians 3: 6, 7.)** Jehovah is the one who draws people. (John 6:44) In the end, each individual will respond to the good news based on his or her heart condition. (Matt. 13: 4-8) Remember that most people did not accept Jesus’ message—and he was the greatest Teacher who ever lived! Really, then, we should not become discouraged if many of the people we try to help do not respond favorably.

<sup>19</sup> We will see benefits when we show fellow feeling in our ministry. We will enjoy our preaching work more. We will experience the greater happiness that comes from giving. And we make it easier for those who are “rightly disposed for everlasting life” to accept the good news. (Acts 13:48) So “as long as we have the opportunity, let us work what is good toward all.” (Gal. 6:10) Then we will have the joy of bringing glory to our heavenly Father.—Matt. 5:16.

19. What benefits come from showing fellow feeling in our ministry?

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#### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Why is it important for us to show fellow feeling in our ministry?
- What example did Jesus set in showing fellow feeling in his ministry?
- What are some practical ways that we can show fellow feeling in our preaching work?

# GOODNESS

## How Can You Cultivate It?

LOVE  
JOY  
PEACE  
PATIENCE  
KINDNESS  
**GOODNESS**  
FAITH  
MILDNESS  
SELF-CONTROL

EACH of us naturally wants to be thought of as being a good person. However, displaying goodness is a challenge in today's world. Many people are "without love of goodness." (2 Tim. 3:3) They may follow a personal standard of right and wrong that, in effect, says that "good is bad and bad is good." (Isa. 5:20) And we all contend with our own background and imperfections. Hence, we may feel like Anne,\* who despite serving Jehovah for decades admits, "I struggle to believe that I can be a good person."

Happily, all of us can cultivate goodness! It is a product of God's holy spirit, and his spirit is more powerful than any external or internal obstacle we might face. Let us examine goodness more closely and learn how we can display this quality more fully.

### WHAT IS GOODNESS?

Simply put, goodness is the quality or state of being good. It involves moral excellence and virtue, without badness or rottenness. Goodness is evident by its beneficial effect on others. It is an active, positive quality manifested in helpful deeds.

You have likely seen that some readily do good things for their family and friends, but is that where goodness should stop? Granted, we are limited in our ability to display this quality, for the Bible says that "there is

no righteous man on earth who always does good and never sins." (Eccl. 7:20) The apostle Paul candidly admitted: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells nothing good." (Rom. 7:18) How reasonable, therefore, to go to the Source of goodness if we want to develop that quality.

### "JEHOVAH IS GOOD"

Jehovah God sets the standard of what is good. Regarding him, we read: "You are good and your works are good. Teach me your regulations." (Ps. 119:68) Let us examine the two aspects of Jehovah's goodness mentioned in that verse.

*Jehovah is good.* Goodness is an inseparable part of Jehovah's personality. Consider what happened when Jehovah told Moses: "I will make all my goodness pass before your face." As Jehovah's glory—including his goodness—passed by, Moses heard these words: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in loyal love and truth, showing loyal love to thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin, but he will by no means leave the guilty unpunished." (Ex. 33:19; 34:6, 7) We have reason to understand, then, that goodness is reflected in every facet of Jehovah's being. Though Jesus was the epitome of goodness in a human, he could say: "Nobody is good except one, God."—Luke 18:19.

\* Some names have been changed.

*Jehovah's works are good.* Goodness is apparent in all of God's doings. "Jehovah is good to all, and his mercy is evident in all his works." (Ps. 145:9) Jehovah's goodness is impartial, providing life and all that humans need to sustain it. (Acts 14:17) His goodness is also shown when he forgives us. The psalmist wrote: "You, O Jehovah, are good and ready to forgive." (Ps. 86:5) We can be certain that "Jehovah will not hold back anything good from those walking in integrity."—Ps. 84:11.

### "LEARN TO DO GOOD"

We are created in God's image, so we have the potential for being good and for doing good. (Gen. 1:27) Nevertheless, God's Word urges his servants to "learn to do good." (Isa. 1:17) But how can we foster this appealing quality? Consider three ways we can do this.

First, we can **pray for holy spirit**, which can help Christians to produce genuine goodness. (Gal. 5:22) Yes, God's spirit can help us come to love what is good and reject what is bad. (Rom. 12:9) In fact, the Bible indicates that Jehovah can make us "firm in

every good deed and word."—2 Thess. 2:16, 17.

Second, we should **read God's inspired Word**. As we do, Jehovah can instruct us in "the entire course of what is good" and equip us "for every good work." (Prov. 2:9; 2 Tim. 3:17) By such reading, followed by meditation, we fill our heart with good things about God and his will. We thus add to a treasure that we can draw on later. —Luke 6:45; Eph. 5:9.

Third, we try our best to **"imitate what is good."** (3 John 11) We find examples to imitate in the Bible. Of course, the prime examples are Jehovah and Jesus. But we can also consider others who were noted for their goodness. Two who might come to mind are Tabitha and Barnabas. (Acts 9:36; 11:22-24) You can profitably analyze their record, taking note of what they did in practical ways to help others. Give some thought to how you can take the initiative to render aid to some in your family or congregation. And do not overlook how each of those two benefited from having the reputation of being a good person. You can benefit similarly.

We see evidence of Jehovah's goodness in creation



We can also give some thought to modern-day examples of those who do good. For instance, consider hardworking elders in the congregation who are ‘lovers of goodness.’ Not to be overlooked are faithful sisters who by word and example are “teachers of what is good.” (Titus 1:8; 2:3) A sister named Roslyn relates: “My friend goes out of her way to help and encourage others in the congregation. She thinks about their situation and often gives them little gifts or helps them in other practical ways. I view her as a truly good person.”

Jehovah encourages his people to “search for what is good.” (Amos 5:14) Doing so, we will not only come to love his standards but also strengthen our motivation to *do* what is good.

## We strive to be good and to do good

We need not imagine that practicing good requires grand gestures or dramatic sacrifices. To illustrate: Do you think of an artist painting a portrait with only one or two brushstrokes? Rather, he may use many brushstrokes to create his painting. Similarly, our goodness can be seen in many helpful acts.

The Bible urges us to be “**prepared**” and “**ready**” to render good. (2 Tim. 2:21; Titus 3:1) Being alert to the circumstances of others, we may see ways to please our neighbor “for his good, to build him up.” (Rom. 15:2) That may involve sharing something we have. (Prov. 3:27) We might invite someone over for a simple meal or for upbuilding association. If we know someone is sick, we can send him a card, visit him, or call him. Yes, we may identify many opportunities to

say “what is good for building up as the need may be, to impart what is beneficial to the hearers.”—Eph. 4:29.

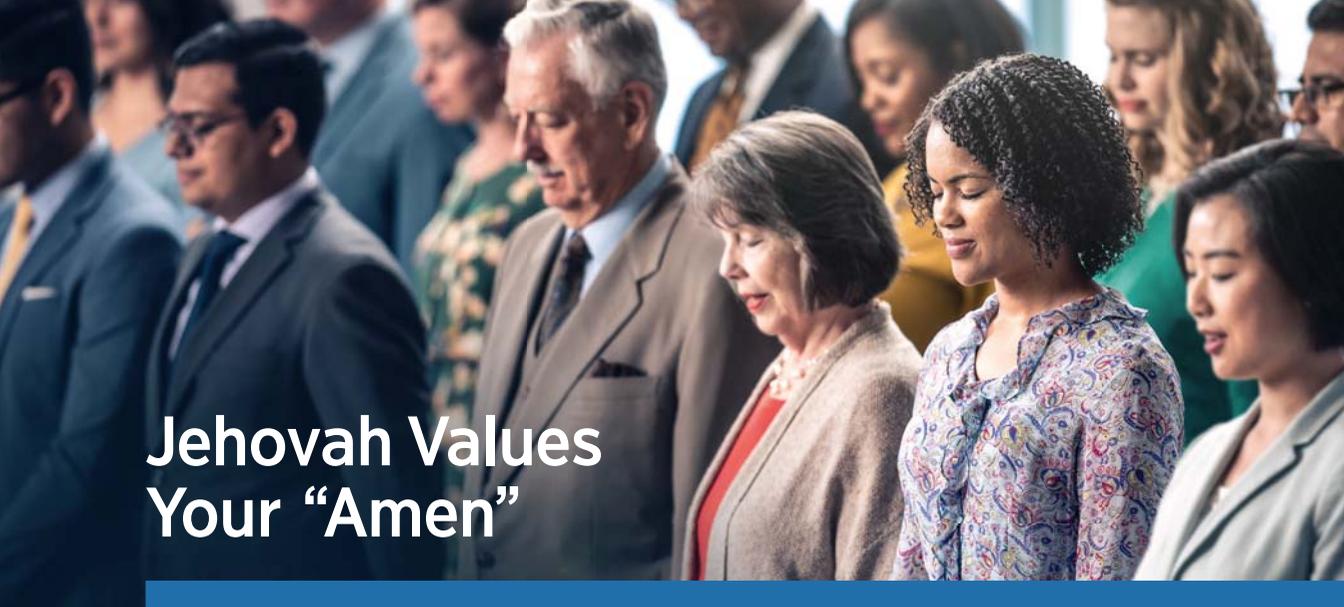
Like Jehovah, we seek to do good to all people. We therefore treat others impartially. An outstanding way is by preaching the good news of the Kingdom to all. As Jesus commanded, we seek to do good even to those who seem to hate us. (Luke 6:27) It is never wrong to be kind and to do what is good to others, for “against such things there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22, 23) By good conduct despite opposition or trials, we may draw others to the truth and glorify God.—1 Pet. 3:16, 17.

## REWARDED BY GOODNESS

“The good man reaps the reward of his dealings.” (Prov. 14:14) What are some of the rewards? When we are good toward others, they are more likely to treat us well in return. (Prov. 14:22) Even if others do not, our persisting in good deeds may soften their disposition and melt their hardness.—Rom. 12:20, ftn.

Many can testify to how they have benefited from doing good and turning away from bad. Consider Nancy’s experience. “I grew up reckless, immoral, and disrespectful,” she admits. “However, as I learned and applied God’s standards of good, I began to feel happier. Now I have dignity and self-respect.”

The greatest reason for us to cultivate goodness is that doing so makes Jehovah happy. Even if many do not see what we do, Jehovah does. He is aware of our every good deed and thought. (Eph. 6:7, 8) With what result? “The good person obtains Jehovah’s approval.” (Prov. 12:2) So let us continue to cultivate goodness. Jehovah promises “glory and honor and peace for everyone who works what is good.”—Rom. 2:10.



# Jehovah Values Your “Amen”

Jehovah values our worship. He is “paying attention and listening” to his servants, and no act of praise, no matter how small, escapes his notice. (Mal. 3:16) For example, consider a word we likely have said countless times. The word is “amen.” Does Jehovah value even that simple expression? Yes, he does! To learn why, let us examine what that word means and how it is used in the Bible.

## “ALL THE PEOPLE WILL SAY, ‘AMEN!’”

The English word “amen” means “so be it,” or “surely.” It comes from a Hebrew root word meaning “be faithful,” “be trustworthy.” It was sometimes used in a legal setting. After a person took an oath, he would say “amen” to verify that what he had said was accurate and that he bound himself to the consequences of what was stated. (Num. 5:22) When he went on record in such a manner, he had added incentive to keep his word.—Neh. 5:13.

A dramatic example of the use of “amen” is recorded in Deuteronomy chapter 27. After the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they were to gather between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim to hear the Law recited. They were there not only to lis-

ten but also to declare that they had accepted the Law. They did this by replying “Amen!” when the results for disobedience were read. (Deut. 27:15-26) Imagine the sound of many thousands of men, women, and children loudly giving their response! (Josh. 8:30-35) They surely never forgot the words they spoke that day. And those Israelites kept their word, for the record states: “Israel continued to serve Jehovah all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and who had known all of Jehovah’s deeds in behalf of Israel.” —Josh. 24:31.

Jesus also used “amen” to affirm the truthfulness of what was said, but he did so in a unique way. Rather than use it to *reply* to a statement, he used “amen” (translated into English as “truly”) to *introduce*

pronouncements of truth. At times, he repeated the word, saying “amen amen.” (Matt. 5:18; John 1:51) He thus assured his listeners that his words were the absolute truth. Jesus could speak with such certainty because he was the one authorized to make all of God’s promises come true.—2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 3:14.

### “THE PEOPLE SAID, ‘AMEN!’ AND THEY PRAISED JEHOVAH”

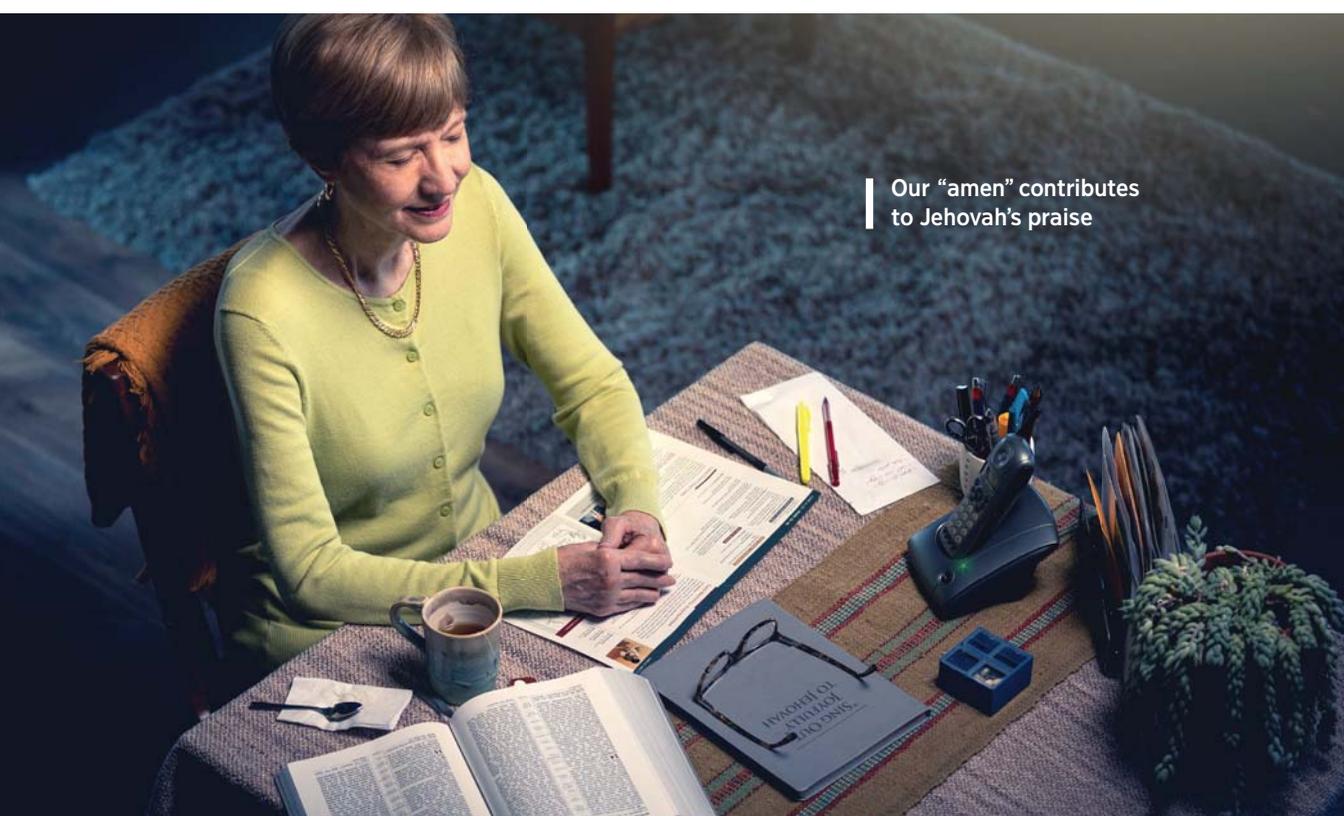
The Israelites also used “amen” when offering praise and prayers to Jehovah. (Neh. 8:6; Ps. 41:13) By saying the word after a prayer, those listening showed that they adopted the prayer as their own. All present were thus able to participate, which enhanced the spiritual occasion. That is what happened when King David brought the Ark of Jehovah to Jerusalem. During the celebration that followed, he delivered the stirring prayer in the form of a song record-

ed at 1 Chronicles 16:8-36. Those attending were so moved by his words that “all the people said, ‘Amen!’ and they praised Jehovah.” Yes, their unified response added to the joy of that day.

First-century Christians likewise used “amen” when extolling Jehovah. Bible writers often included it in their letters. (Rom. 1:25; 16:27; 1 Pet. 4:11) The book of Revelation even depicts spirit creatures in heaven glorifying Jehovah by saying: “Amen! Praise Jah!” (Rev. 19:1, 4) Early Christians customarily said “amen” after prayers offered at their meetings. (1 Cor. 14:16) However, it was not a word they were simply to repeat by rote.

### WHY YOUR “AMEN” MATTERS

After reviewing its background and history, we can see why “amen” is such a meaningful way to conclude a prayer. When we say it at the end of our own prayer, we



Our “amen” contributes  
to Jehovah’s praise

## SHOULD YOU ALWAYS SAY “AMEN”?

“Amen” is not a word we take lightly. However, what if the one offering a prayer phrases something incorrectly? Do we need to withhold our “amen”? Not necessarily. After all, Jehovah recognizes that we all err with our tongue, and he overlooks those errors. So rather than be overly critical, if we focus on the spirit behind the words, we may feel that we can still say “amen” to what was said.

On the other hand, we do not say “amen,” audibly or in our heart, to a prayer offered by an unbeliever. What if we happen to be present when such a prayer is offered? For example, we might be attending some secular event where someone is asked to offer a prayer. Or we might be in a religiously divided household and the head of the house, who is not a believer, decides to lead the family in prayer. What should we do?

If we find ourselves in such a situation, we can remain silent and respectful. We would

not participate by saying “amen”; nor would we hold hands with others during the prayer, for that would indicate that we are joining in the prayer. We might choose to say our own silent prayer, but we would avoid saying an audible “amen” so that we do not give others the impression that we are sharing in their prayer. If the group stands, it is up to us to decide whether we too will stand. Standing or bowing our head is not an act of worship in itself. It is up to the individual Christian to determine which course he considers best under the circumstances, and no one should be criticized for his choice on such occasions.

The above situations further illustrate why our “amen” matters to Jehovah.

show that we really mean what we said. And when we are moved to respond “amen,” even silently, to a public prayer, we show our support for the sentiments expressed. Consider why else our “amen” matters.

### **We are active and alert in our worship.**

We worship Jehovah during prayer not only by what we say but also by how we behave. Our desire to offer a valid “amen” may help us to maintain a proper attitude and keep our mind on the prayer.

**We are united as worshippers.** Public prayer focuses our attention on what the rest of the congregation is hearing. (Acts 1:14; 12:5) When we are moved to respond in unison with our brothers and sisters, we are further united. Whether we say it out loud or in our heart, our “amen” gives Jehovah

added reason to act in harmony with our collective request.

**We praise Jehovah.** Jehovah notices our small acts of worship. (Luke 21:2, 3) He sees what our motive is and what is in our heart. Even when we must listen in by telephone to a meeting, we can be sure our humble “amen” does not go unnoticed by Jehovah. It adds to the collective praise offered to him.

Our “amen” may seem of little value, but it is by no means insignificant. “Through the use of this one word,” states one Bible encyclopedia, God’s servants can express “the confidence, strong approval, and earnest hope that is in their hearts.” May every “amen” we utter be pleasing to Jehovah. —Ps. 19:14.

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## FEATURED CONTENT ON JW.ORG

### WAS IT DESIGNED?

#### **The Fruit Fly's Aerobatic Ability**

Fruit flies are able to make turns similar to those made by fighter jets but in a fraction of a second. Where did this tiny insect's aerobatic ability come from?

(Go to [BIBLE TEACHINGS > SCIENCE & THE BIBLE](#).)

### THE BIBLE CHANGES LIVES

#### **I Seemed to Have Everything I Could Hope For**

Stéphane was young, successful, and famous; yet, he felt empty and unfulfilled. How did he find true happiness and purpose in life?

(Go to [BIBLE TEACHINGS > PEACE & HAPPINESS](#).)

### COVER PICTURE:

Away from the crowd, Jesus compassionately heals a deaf man (See study article 12, paragraph 11)

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