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THE **WATCHTOWER**
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Jehovah
—Our Provider
and Protector

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Jehovah
—Our Best Friend

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STUDY ARTICLES

■ **Jehovah—Our Provider and Protector**

■ **Jehovah—Our Best Friend**

What can enhance our appreciation for Jehovah as our heavenly Father? These articles will help us to strengthen our relationship with Jehovah as our Provider, Protector, and best Friend. They will also stimulate us to help others to honor him.

Jehovah **—Our Provider and Protector**

*“Because he has affection for me,
I will rescue him. I will protect him because he knows
my name.”—PS. 91:14.*

HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?

Why can we say that Jehovah is the Grand Provider?

What role has Jesus played in reconciling humans to God?

How does Jehovah protect those who love and obey him?

JEHOVAH is responsible for the existence of the family arrangement. (Eph. 3:14, 15) Even if we belong to the same family, however, we have different traits and circumstances. You may have lived with your parents from birth to adulthood. Others may have lost their parents in death, perhaps because of sickness, an accident, or some other tragedy. Still others do not even know who their parents are.

1, 2. What differences do we have in family circumstances and spiritual backgrounds?

2 Among members of Jehovah’s family of worshippers, spiritual backgrounds also vary. You may have been ‘brought up in the truth,’ as some say, and your parents inculcated godly principles in you. (Deut. 6:6, 7) Or you may be one of the thousands who have come to learn the truth through the preaching activity of other servants of Jehovah.—Rom. 10:13-15; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4.

3 Despite the factors just mentioned, all of us have certain things in common. We suffer the consequences of Adam’s disobedience and have inherited imperfection, sin, and death. (Rom. 5:12) Even so, as true worshippers, we can rightly address Jehovah as “our Father.” Referring to God’s chosen people of ancient times, Isaiah 64:8 states: “O Jehovah, you are our Father.” Moreover, Jesus opened his model prayer with the words: “Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.”—Matt. 6:9.

3. What do all of us have in common?

4 Our heavenly Father provides the care and protection we need as a people calling on his name in faith. The psalmist quotes him as saying: “Because he [a true worshipper] has affection for me, I will rescue him. I will protect him because he knows my name.” (Ps. 91:14) Yes, Jehovah God lovingly provides escape from our enemies and protects us as his people, so that we are not wiped out.

5 To enhance our appreciation for our heavenly Father, let us consider three important factors: (1) Our Father is our Provider. (2) Jehovah is our Protector. (3) And God is our best Friend. As we consider these points, it will be helpful to meditate on our relationship with God and discern how we can honor him as our Father. It will also be beneficial to reflect on the blessings

4, 5. As we examine the depth of our appreciation for our Father, Jehovah, what will it be helpful to consider?

Jehovah holds out to those who draw close to him.—Jas. 4:8.

JEHOVAH, THE GRAND PROVIDER

6 “Every good gift and every perfect present is from above,” wrote the disciple James, “coming down from the Father of the celestial lights.” (Jas. 1:17) Life itself is a wonderful gift from Jehovah. (Ps. 36:9) By using our lives to do the divine will, we experience abundant blessings now and have the prospect of eternal life in the new world. (Prov. 10:22; 2 Pet. 3:13) But how is this possible in view of the tragic consequences of Adam’s disobedience?

7 Jehovah is indeed the Grand Provider in ways without number. For instance, his undeserved kindness comes to our rescue. Yes, all

6. What is one way in which Jehovah proves to be the Giver of “every good gift”?

7. How has God opened the way for us to have a close relationship with him?

of us are sinful and have inherited imperfection from our first earthly father. (Rom. 3:23) Nevertheless, because of Jehovah’s love, he took the initiative to open the way for us to have a close relationship with him. “By this the love of God was revealed in our case,” wrote the apostle John, “that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might gain life through him. The love is in this respect, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins.”—1 John 4:9, 10.

8 In the 19th century B.C.E., a prophetic event unfolded that reveals the extent of Jehovah’s loving provision for obedient humans to enjoy everlasting life. Hebrews 11:17-19 explains: “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, as good as offered up Isaac—the man who had gladly

8, 9. How did Jehovah prove to be the Grand Provider in the time of Abraham and Isaac? (See opening image of the standard edition.)

received the promises attempted to offer up his only-begotten son—although it had been said to him: ‘What will be called your offspring will be through Isaac.’ But he reasoned that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, and he did receive him from there in an illustrative way.” It is not difficult to see the parallel. Jehovah offered his Son, Jesus Christ, in behalf of the world of mankind.—Read John 3:16, 36.

9 How Isaac must have welcomed his deliverance from a sacrificial death! He was undoubtedly grateful for God’s provision of a replacement sacrifice—a ram caught in a nearby thicket. (Gen. 22:10-13) No wonder that place came to be called “Jehovah-jireh,” which means “Jehovah Will Provide.”—Gen. 22:14; ftn.

PROVISION FOR RECONCILIATION

10 As we meditate on how Jehovah proves to

10, 11. Who have taken the lead in “the ministry of the reconciliation,” and how have they done so?

be the Grand Provider, we gratefully acknowledge the vital role played by Jesus Christ, even as Paul did when he wrote: “This is what we have concluded, that one man died for all; so, then, all had died. And he died for all so that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.” —2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

11 Because of their love for God and their gratitude for the inestimable privilege of serving him, the early Christians gladly accepted “the ministry of the reconciliation.” Their work of preaching and making disciples opened the way for honesthearted individuals to come to be at peace with God, enjoy his friendship, and eventually become his spiritual children. Today, anointed servants of Jehovah perform the same ministry. What they accomplish as ambassadors for God and Christ makes it possible for rightly

disposed people to be drawn by Jehovah and become believers.—Read **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**; **John 6:44**; **Acts 13:48**.

12 Out of appreciation for Jehovah as the Grand Provider, all Christians who have an earthly hope share with the anointed in the Kingdom-preaching work. In this activity, we make use of the Bible, another of God's splendid provisions. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) By skillful use of God's inspired Word in our ministry, we give others the opportunity to gain everlasting life. To help us in this work, each of us relies on yet another provision from Jehovah—his holy spirit. (Zech. 4:6; Luke 11:13) The results are impressive, as shown in each edition of the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*. What an honor it is to share in this work to the praise of our Father and Provider!

12, 13. How can we show that we appreciate Jehovah's many provisions?

13 In view of all that God has provided, we do well to ask ourselves: ‘Am I doing all I can in my ministry to show Jehovah the depth of my appreciation for his provisions? In what ways can I improve and become a more effective preacher of the good news?’ We can demonstrate our gratitude for God’s wonderful provisions by keeping Kingdom interests first in our lives. If we do so, Jehovah will see to it that our needs are cared for. (Matt. 6:25-33) Because of God’s love, we surely want to do as much as we can to please him and make his heart rejoice.—Prov. 27:11.

14 The psalmist David sang: “I am helpless and poor; may Jehovah pay attention to me. You are my helper and my rescuer.” (Ps. 40:17) Jehovah has repeatedly been the Rescuer of his people as a group, especially when they have been severely persecuted and relentlessly hounded by

14. How has Jehovah been the Rescuer of his people?

their enemies. How thankful we are for God's help at such times and for the many spiritual provisions he constantly makes for us!

JEHOVAH PROTECTS

15 A loving father not only provides for his children but also seeks to protect them. He would naturally try to rescue them if they were in danger. One brother remembers a specific incident that occurred when he was just a young boy. He and his father were returning home from the field service when their path took them across a stream. A heavy downpour that morning had caused the brook to flood. The only way to cross the water was to jump from one large stone to another. Going ahead of his father, the boy lost his footing on one of the stones, tumbled into the flooding water, and went under twice.

15. Illustrate how a loving father seeks to protect his child.

How grateful the boy was that his father quickly grabbed him firmly by the shoulder and saved him from drowning! Our heavenly Father delivers us from what might be viewed as raging torrents of this wicked world and from its ruler, Satan. Jehovah is certainly the best Protector anyone could ever hope to have.—Matt. 6:13; 1 John 5:19.

16 The loving protection made possible by Jehovah is well-illustrated by what occurred after he rescued the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and miraculously protected them as they crossed the Red Sea in 1513 B.C.E. After trekking through the wilderness toward Mount Sinai, the nation arrived at Rephidim.

17 In view of the divine prophecy of Genesis 3:15, Satan may have been desperate as he looked

16, 17. How did Jehovah help and protect the Israelites when they fought the Amalekites?

for an opportunity to attack the vulnerable Israelites. He did this through the Amalekites, who were enemies of God's people. (Num. 24:20) Consider what Jehovah accomplished by means of four faithful men—Joshua, Moses, Aaron, and Hur. As Joshua fought the Amalekites, stationed on a nearby hill were Moses, Aaron, and Hur. The Israelites proved superior in battle when Moses raised his hands. When his hands became heavy, Aaron and Hur supported them. So it was that with Jehovah's help and protection, "Joshua defeated Amalek and his people." (Ex. 17:8-13) Moses built an altar there, calling it "Jehovah-nissi," which means "Jehovah Is My Signal Pole."—Read Exodus 17:14, 15; ftn.

KEPT SAFE FROM SATAN'S CLUTCHES

18 Jehovah protects those who love and obey

18, 19. What protection has God provided for his servants in our time?

him. Like the Israelites at Rephidim, we look to God for safety when confronted by enemies. Jehovah has often protected us as a group, and he keeps us out of the Devil's clutches. Think of the many occasions when God has safeguarded our brothers who were maintaining their Christian neutrality. For example, this was the case during the Nazi era in Germany and other countries in the 1930's and early 1940's. Reading and reflecting on life stories and *Yearbook* accounts of God's protection during times of persecution will strengthen our trust in Jehovah as our Refuge.—Ps. 91:2.

19 Through Jehovah's organization and its publications, we receive loving reminders for our protection. Consider how this has proved to be of benefit in recent times. As this world sinks further into the quagmire of debauchery and

pornography, Jehovah has provided urgent reminders and practical help to alert us to moral dangers. For instance, we receive fatherly counsel to avoid bad associations through the misuse of social networking.*—1 Cor. 15:33.

20 How can we demonstrate that we are really being “taught by Jehovah”? By carefully heeding his commands. (Isa. 54:13) In the safe haven of our congregations, we find needed guidance and protection, for it is there that faithful men who serve as elders provide Scriptural help and counsel. (Gal. 6:1) Much of Jehovah’s tender care reaches us through these “gifts in men.” (Eph. 4:7, 8) How should we respond? Willing sub-

* Examples of such reminders can be found in the articles “The Internet—Making Wise Use of a Global Tool” in *The Watchtower*, August 15, 2011, pages 3-5 and “Beware of the Devil’s Snares!” and “Stand Firm and Avoid Satan’s Traps!” in *The Watchtower*, August 15, 2012, pages 20-29.

20. What protection and guidance are available through the Christian congregation?

mission and obedience result in God's blessing.
—Heb. 13:17.

21 Let us be determined to be led by holy spirit and thus yield to the guidance of our heavenly Father. We also need to meditate on the life course of his Son, Jesus Christ, whose peerless example we strive to follow. For his obedience even to the point of death, Jesus received a rich reward. (Phil. 2:5-11) Like him, we will be blessed for trusting in Jehovah with all our heart. (Prov. 3:5, 6) So may we always look to Jehovah as the Provider and Protector beyond compare. What a joy and great privilege it is to serve him! Our love for him will grow as we reflect on the third aspect of our Father's care for us—his friendship. The next article focuses on how Jehovah is our best Friend.

21. (a) We should be determined to do what? (b) What will be considered in the next article?

Jehovah—Our Best Friend

“[Abraham] came to be called Jehovah’s friend.”
—JAS. 2:23.

HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?

On what basis can Jehovah be your Friend?

According to Psalm 15:3, 5, what does God require of us if we are to enjoy his friendship?

What will help us to open our hearts to our best Friend?

“LIKE father, like son” is an oft-repeated phrase. Indeed, many children closely resemble their parents. After all, both the father and the mother contribute to their child’s genetic heritage. Jehovah, our heavenly Father, is the Giver of life. (Ps. 36:9) And we, his human children, resemble him to some extent. Being created in his image, we have the ability to reason and draw con-

1. Having been created in God’s image, we possess what ability?

clusions and develop and maintain friendships.
—Gen. 1:26.

2 Jehovah can be our best Friend. Such friendship is based on God’s love for us and our faith in him and his Son. Jesus stated: “God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) There are many examples of those who have had a close relationship with Jehovah. Let us consider two of them.

“ABRAHAM MY FRIEND”

3 Jehovah referred to the patriarch and ancestor of the Israelites as “Abraham my friend.” (Isa. 41:8) Second Chronicles 20:7 also calls Abraham a friend of God. What was the basis for that faithful man’s enduring friendship with his Creator?

2. On what basis can Jehovah become our Friend?

3, 4. As regards friendship with Jehovah, contrast Abraham with his descendants.

It was Abraham's faith.—Gen. 15:6; read James 2:21-23.

4 Abraham's descendants who became the nation of ancient Israel originally had Jehovah as their Father and Friend. Sadly, however, they lost their friendship with God. Why? Because they failed to keep exercising faith in Jehovah's promises.

5 The more you learn about Jehovah, the stronger your faith in him becomes, and your love for him deepens. Think back to the time when you discovered that God is a real Person, someone with whom you could develop a close relationship. You also learned that all of us have been born in sin because of Adam's disobedience. You came to understand that mankind as a whole is alienated from God. (Col. 1:21) Then you came

5, 6. (a) How has Jehovah become your Friend? (b) What questions deserve our attention?

to realize that our loving heavenly Father is not a remote person who is not interested in us. When we learned about his provision of Jesus' ransom sacrifice and exercised faith in that provision, we began to build a friendship with God.

6 As we look back now, we might well ask ourselves: 'Am I making progress in my friendship with God? Is my trust in him strong, and is my love for my beloved Friend, Jehovah, growing each day?' Another person of ancient times who had a close relationship with Jehovah was Gideon. Let us now consider his fine example and take it to heart.

“JEHOVAH IS PEACE”

7 Judge Gideon served Jehovah during a turbulent period of Israel's history after the nation entered the Promised Land. Judges chapter 6 relates

7-9. (a) What remarkable experience did Gideon have, and what was the result of it? (See opening image of the standard edition.) (b) How can we experience friendship with Jehovah?

that Jehovah's angel visited Gideon at Ophrah. At that time, the neighboring Midianites were a real threat to Israel. For that reason, Gideon was threshing wheat, not in the open field, but in a winepress, where he could quickly hide the valuable grain. Surprised that the angel appeared and addressed him as a "mighty warrior," Gideon questioned whether Jehovah, who had delivered the Israelites out of Egypt, was really going to help them now. Speaking on behalf of the Creator, the angel reassured Gideon that Jehovah truly was backing him.

8 Gideon wondered how it would be possible for him to "save Israel out of Midian's hand." The answer he received was direct: "Because I will be with you," said Jehovah, "you will strike down Midian as if they were one man." (Judg. 6:11-16) No doubt still wondering just how this would work out, Gideon sought a sign. Notice that in

this conversation there is no question but that Gideon viewed Jehovah as a real Person.

9 What happened next strengthened Gideon's faith and brought him closer to God. Gideon prepared a meal and served it to the angel. When the food was miraculously consumed by fire at the touch of the angel's staff, Gideon realized that the angel was indeed Jehovah's representative. Alarmed, Gideon exclaimed: "Alas, Sovereign Lord Jehovah, for I have seen Jehovah's angel face-to-face!" (Judg. 6:17-22) But did that encounter erect a barrier between Gideon and his God? Certainly not! The opposite occurred. Gideon came to know Jehovah in such a way that he felt at peace with God. We know this from the name given to the altar that Gideon erected at that place—"Jehovah-shalom." That name means "Jehovah Is Peace." (Read Judges 6:23, 24; ftn.) When we meditate on what Jehovah does for us

each day, we come to realize that he is a true Friend. Regular prayer to God increases our feeling of peace and strengthens our friendship with him.

WHO WILL BE ‘A GUEST IN JEHOVAH’S TENT’?

10 For Jehovah to be our Friend, however, we must meet certain conditions. As recorded in Psalm 15, David sang about what is required for us to be ‘a guest in Jehovah’s tent,’ that is, to be a friend of God. (Ps. 15:1) Let us focus on two of these requirements—avoiding slander and acting honestly in all our dealings. With regard to these matters, David said of a guest in Jehovah’s tent: “He does not slander with his tongue . . . He does not accept a bribe against the innocent.”
—Ps. 15:3, 5.

10. According to Psalm 15:3, 5, what does Jehovah require of us if we are to be his friends?

11 In another psalm, David warned: “Guard your tongue from what is bad.” (Ps. 34:13) Failure to heed this inspired counsel would create a gap between us and our righteous heavenly Father. In fact, slander is a characteristic of Jehovah’s great enemy, Satan. The term “Devil” is derived from a Greek word meaning “slanderer.” Controlling what we say about others helps preserve closeness with Jehovah. Especially is this true of our attitude regarding appointed men in the congregation.—Read Hebrews 13:17; Jude 8.

12 Honesty, not exploitation, likewise characterizes Jehovah’s servants. The apostle Paul wrote: “Keep praying for us, for we trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things.” (Heb. 13:18)

11. Why must we avoid slandering anyone?

12, 13. (a) Why should we be honest in all things? (b) How may our honesty affect others?

Because we are determined to “conduct ourselves honestly in all things,” we avoid taking advantage of our Christian brothers. For example, if they work for us secularly, we make sure that they are fairly treated and paid in line with the agreement we have made with them. As Christians, we deal honestly with our employees and with all others. And if we are employed by a fellow Christian, we are careful not to take advantage of him by demanding special privileges.

13 How often we hear expressions of appreciation from those in the world who have dealings with Jehovah’s Witnesses! For example, the director of a large construction services organization noticed that Jehovah’s Witnesses keep their word. “You always stick to what you have agreed to do,” he said. (Ps. 15:4) Such conduct helps us to maintain our friendship with Jehovah. Moreover, it brings praise to our loving heavenly Father.

HELP OTHERS TO BECOME JEHOVAH'S FRIENDS

14 Though they may believe that God exists, many people we meet in our ministry do not view him as their best Friend. How can we help them? Consider the instructions Jesus gave 70 of his disciples when he sent them out by twos in order to preach: “Wherever you enter into a house, say first: ‘May this house have peace.’ And if a friend of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if there is not, it will return to you.” (Luke 10:5, 6) We can attract people to the truth by our friendly approach. In the case of opposers, this may help to dispel hostility and pave the way for a better reception on another occasion.

15 When we meet individuals who are steeped in false religion or who follow unscriptural customs, we continue to manifest a friendly, peaceful

14, 15. In our ministry, how can we help others to become Jehovah’s friends?

attitude. We warmly welcome to our meetings those whose dissatisfaction with modern-day society awakens in them a desire to learn more about the God we worship. Articles in the series “The Bible Changes Lives” provide us with many fine examples.

WORKING WITH OUR BEST FRIEND

16 People who work together often develop close friendships. All who are dedicated to Jehovah have the privilege of being considered both his friends and his “fellow workers.” (Read **1 Corinthians 3:9**.) Indeed, as we engage in the preaching and disciple-making work, we gain greater insight into the marvelous qualities of our heavenly Father. We see how his holy spirit helps to equip us to carry out our commission to preach the good news.

16. In what sense can we be considered both Jehovah’s friends and his “fellow workers”?

17 The greater our share in the disciple-making work, the closer we feel to Jehovah. For instance, we observe the way Jehovah thwarts opposers. Look back over the past few years. Have we not seen clearly the way God is guiding us? We marvel at the ongoing supply of rich spiritual food. Our convention and assembly programs reveal our Father's loving insight into our problems and needs. In a letter of appreciation for a convention, one family wrote: "The program really reached our hearts. We felt how much Jehovah loves each and every one of us and wants us to succeed." After attending a special convention in Ireland, a couple from Germany expressed gratitude for the way they had been warmly welcomed and cared for, adding: "But our greatest thanks go to Jehovah and his King Jesus Christ. They have invited us to be part of this truly united nation. We are

17. How does the spiritual food provided at our assemblies and conventions demonstrate that Jehovah is our Friend?

not just talking about unity but are enjoying it every day. Our experiences in connection with the special convention in Dublin will always remind us of the precious privilege we have to serve our great God together with all of you.”

FRIENDS COMMUNICATE

18 Friendship deepens when good communication exists. Social networking and text messaging are very popular in this age of Internet and telecommunications technology. By comparison, though, how do we individually rate our personal communication with our best Friend, Jehovah? True, he is the “Hearer of prayer.” (Ps. 65:2) But how often do we take the initiative to speak to him?

19 Some servants of God do not find it easy to

18. What might we ask ourselves regarding our communication with Jehovah?

19. We have access to what help if we find it difficult to open our hearts to our heavenly Father?

open their hearts and express their deep emotions. Yet, that is what Jehovah wants us to do when we pray. (Ps. 119:145; Lam. 3:41) Even if we find such heartfelt expressions difficult to put into words, we are not without help. Paul wrote to Christians in Rome: “The problem is that we do not know what we should pray for as we need to, but the spirit itself pleads for us with unuttered groanings. But the one who searches the hearts knows what the meaning of the spirit is, because it is pleading in harmony with God for the holy ones.” (Rom. 8:26, 27) Our meditating on the words recorded in such Bible books as Job, Psalms, and Proverbs will help us to express our inmost feelings to Jehovah.

20 When distressing situations confront us, let us heed Paul’s inspired advice to the Philippians: “Do not be anxious over anything, but in

20, 21. What comfort do Paul’s words at Philippians 4:6, 7 provide?

everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God.” Such open communication with our best Friend will surely bring us comfort and consolation, for Paul adds: “The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:6, 7) May we always cherish the incomparable “peace of God” that really does guard our hearts and mental powers.

21 Prayer helps us to cultivate a friendship with Jehovah. Therefore, let us “pray constantly.” (1 Thess. 5:17) May this study strengthen our precious relationship with God and our determination to comply with his righteous requirements. And let us take time to meditate on the blessings we enjoy because Jehovah truly is our Father, our God, and our Friend.

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