

# How to Remain in God's Love

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# How to Remain in God's Love

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## CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1. God's Love Lasts Forever . . . . .	5
2. A Good Conscience With God . . . . .	16
3. Choose Friends Who Love God . . . . .	31
4. Why Respect Authority? . . . . .	45
5. How to Keep Separate From the World . . . . .	60
6. How to Choose Our Entertainment . . . . .	75
7. Do You Value Life as God Does? . . . . .	89
8. Jehovah Wants His People to Be Clean . . . . .	104
9. "Flee From Sexual Immorality!" . . . . .	118
10. Marriage—A Gift From God . . . . .	132
11. After the Wedding Day . . . . .	147
12. Speak What "Is Good for Building Up" . . . . .	159
13. Do All Celebrations Please God? . . . . .	172
14. Be Honest in All Things . . . . .	187
15. Enjoy Your Work . . . . .	200
16. Oppose the Devil . . . . .	213
17. Remain in God's Love . . . . .	226
Endnotes . . . . .	238

## **To those who love Jehovah God and his Word, the Bible:**

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free,” said Jesus. (John 8:32) Think of how you felt when you first found the truth from the Bible! It was exciting to know that in a world full of lies, we can learn the truth.—2 Timothy 3:1.

Jehovah God wants us to know the truth. And because we love people, we want to tell them about it. But there is more to serving God. We must do our best to live as Christians because we deeply respect Jehovah’s principles. Jesus explained an important way that we can prove to God that we love him. He said: “If you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have observed the commandments of the Father and remain in his love.”—John 15:10.

Jesus really loves his Father, and he does everything his Father asks him to do. If we imitate Jesus in the way that we live, Jehovah will love us and we will be truly happy. As Jesus said, “if you know these things, happy you are if you do them.”—John 13:17.

We hope that this publication will help you learn to live by the truth from the Bible and to become a friend of God. It is our prayer that you will grow in your love for God and remain “in God’s love . . . with everlasting life in view.”—Jude 21.

*Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses*



## GOD'S LOVE LASTS FOREVER

“This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome.”—1 JOHN 5:3.

DO YOU love God? You may love him so much that you have dedicated yourself to him. You may feel that he is your best Friend. But even before you loved Jehovah, he loved you. In the Bible we read: “We love, because he first loved us.”—1 John 4:19.

<sup>2</sup> Think of all the ways Jehovah has shown his love for us. He has given us the earth as a beautiful home and everything else we need to enjoy life. (Matthew 5:43-48; Revelation 4:11) He wants us to have a good relationship with him, and he has made it possible for us to learn about him. When we read the Bible, we are listening to Jehovah. And when we pray, he is listening to us. (Psalm 65:2) He guides and strengthens us with his powerful holy spirit. (Luke 11:13) He even sent his precious Son to earth to free us from sin and death.—**Read John 3:16; Romans 5:8.**

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1, 2. Why do you love Jehovah God?

<sup>3</sup> Think for a moment about one of your close friends, someone who has been with you through both happy times and sad ones. It takes effort to keep a close friendship like that strong. This is also true of our friendship with Jehovah, the closest Friend we could ever have. Our friendship with him can last forever. So the Bible tells us: “Keep yourselves in God’s love.” (Jude 21) How can we do this? The Bible answers: “This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome.” —1 John 5:3.

### **“THIS IS WHAT THE LOVE OF GOD MEANS”**

<sup>4</sup> What does the Bible mean when it says “the love of God”? This does not refer to God’s love for us but refers to our love for him. Do you remember when you first began to love Jehovah?

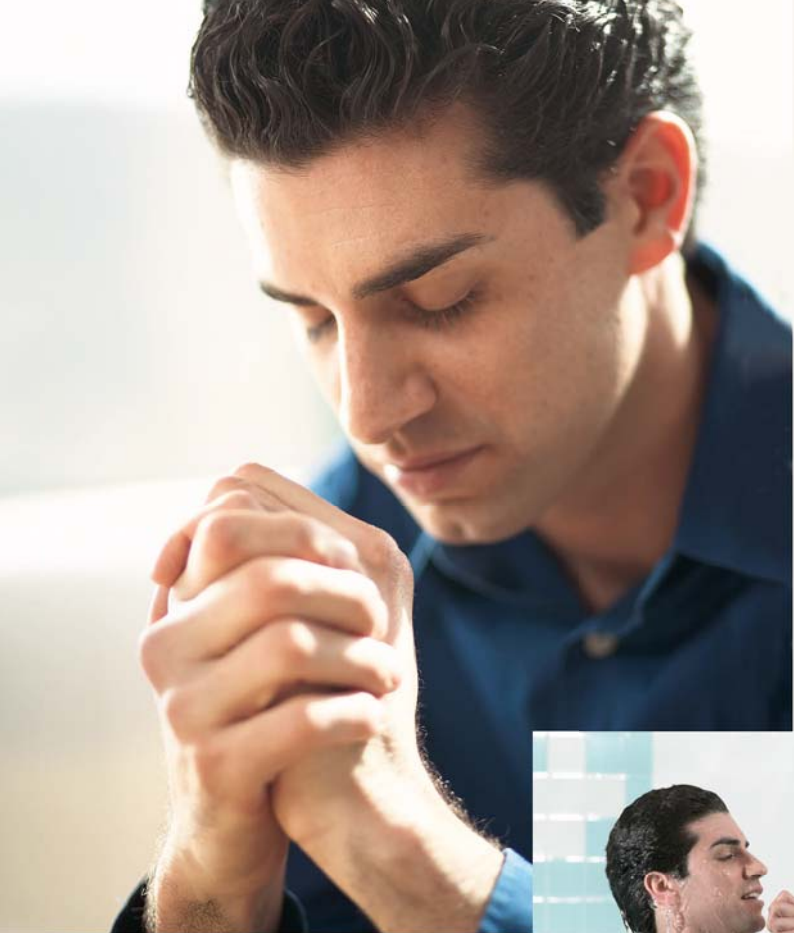
<sup>5</sup> Recall how you felt when you first learned that Jehovah wants you to live forever in his new world. You learned about all that he has done to make this possible, and you realized what a precious gift Jehovah gave to us when he sent his own Son to earth. (Matthew 20:28; John 8:29; Romans 5:12, 18) As you learned just how much Jehovah loves you, your heart was moved, and you began to love him too.—**Read 1 John 4:9, 10.**

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3. How do we keep a good relationship with Jehovah?

4, 5. (a) What does “the love of God” mean? (b) How did your love for Jehovah begin to grow?





**When you dedicate yourself  
to Jehovah and get baptized,  
you show that you love him  
and want to obey him forever**

**6** But that feeling of love for God was only the beginning. For example, when we love someone, we do more than just say the words “I love you.” Love causes us to want to do things that will make that person happy. In the same way, your love for Jehovah made you want to live in a way that would please him. As that love grew, you likely dedicated yourself to him and got baptized. By doing that, you promised to serve Jehovah forever. (**Read Romans 14:7, 8.**) How can you keep that promise?

### **“WE OBSERVE HIS COMMANDMENTS”**

**7** Because we love Jehovah, “we observe his commandments.” How do we do this? We obey him. In the Bible we learn how Jehovah wants us to live. For example, he tells us that it is wrong to get drunk, to steal or lie, to have sex with someone we are not married to, or to worship anyone or anything other than him.—1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:18; 10:14; Ephesians 4:28; Colossians 3:9.

**8** But to please Jehovah, we need to do more than simply obey his commandments. He has not given us a long list of laws that cover every situation in life. So there will be times when there is no specific law in the Bible to tell us what to do. How can we make good decisions? (Ephesians 5:17) In the Bible

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6. What does loving someone involve? What has your love for God moved you to do?

7. If we love Jehovah, what will we do? What are some of his commandments?

8, 9. How do we know what Jehovah wants us to do in situations where there is no specific law in the Bible? Give an example.

we find principles, which are basic truths that teach us how Jehovah views things. And as we read the Bible, we get to know who Jehovah is as a Person. We learn the way he thinks, including what he loves and what he hates.—**Read Psalm 97:10; Proverbs 6:16-19; see Endnote 1.**

<sup>9</sup> For example, how do we decide what to watch on TV or what to look at on the Internet? Jehovah does not tell us exactly what we should do. But the principles he gives us will help us to make good decisions. Much entertainment today is full of violence and sex. In the Bible, Jehovah tells us that “he hates anyone who loves violence” and that he “will judge sexually immoral people.” (Psalm 11:5; Hebrews 13:4) How can these principles help us to make good decisions? Once we know that Jehovah hates something or views it as immoral, we should avoid it.

<sup>10</sup> Why do we obey Jehovah? It is not just to avoid punishment or the problems that come from making bad decisions. (Galatians 6:7) No, we obey Jehovah because we love him. Just as children want to make their father happy, we want to make our heavenly Father happy. Nothing could be better than knowing that Jehovah is pleased with us!—Psalm 5:12; Proverbs 12:2; see Endnote 2.

<sup>11</sup> We don't obey Jehovah only when it is easy or when we have no other choice. And we don't

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10, 11. Why do we obey Jehovah?

choose which of his laws and standards to follow and which ones not to follow. (Deuteronomy 12:32) Instead, we obey him completely, like the psalmist who said: "I am fond of your commandments, yes, I love them." (Psalm 119:47; Romans 6:17) We want to be like Noah, who showed his love for Jehovah by doing everything Jehovah commanded him to do. The Bible says that Noah "did just so." (Genesis 6:22) Do you want Jehovah to say that about you?

<sup>12</sup> How does Jehovah feel when we obey him? We make his "heart rejoice." (Proverbs 11:20; 27:11) Just think about that! We make the Creator of the universe happy when we obey him. But he never forces us to do so. Instead, he has given us free will. This means that we have the freedom to choose to do right or wrong. Jehovah wants our love for him to move us to make good decisions so that we can have the best life possible.—Deuteronomy 30:15, 16, 19, 20; see Endnote 3.

### **"HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT BURDENSOME"**

<sup>13</sup> What if we think that Jehovah's commandments are just too difficult to obey or that they will take away our freedom? The Bible clearly says: "His commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) The Greek word for "burdensome" means "heavy."

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12. How can we make Jehovah happy?

13, 14. How do we know that God's commandments are not too difficult to obey? Illustrate.

In other scriptures, this word is used to describe unreasonable rules or people who try to control and hurt others. (Matthew 23:4; Acts 20:29, 30) The *New English Translation* puts it this way: "His commandments do not weigh us down." Jehovah's commandments are not "heavy," that is, they are not too difficult for us to obey. He is always reasonable in what he asks of us.

<sup>14</sup> For example, imagine you are helping a friend move to a new home. He has packed all his things into boxes. Some are light and easy to carry, but others are so heavy that it takes two people to lift them. Would your friend ask you to pick up a very heavy box all by yourself? Of course not! Why? Because he doesn't want you to get hurt. Like that friend, Jehovah would never ask us to do something that is too difficult. (Deuteronomy 30:11-14) Jehovah understands who we are. He "knows how we are formed, remembering that we are dust."—Psalm 103:14.

<sup>15</sup> Moses told the nation of Israel that Jehovah's commandments were for their "lasting good" and that their obedience would help them to "keep alive." (Deuteronomy 5:28-33; 6:24) The same is true today. Anything Jehovah asks us to do will make our lives better. (**Read Isaiah 48:17.**) Our Father, Jehovah, always knows what is best for us. (Romans 11:33) The Bible tells us: "God is love."

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15. Why can we be sure that Jehovah's commandments are for our good?

(1 John 4:8) This means that everything Jehovah says and does is motivated by love.

**16** It is not always easy for us to obey God. We live in a wicked world that is ruled by the Devil. He tries to influence people to do what is bad. (1 John 5: 19) We also have to fight against our own imperfect thoughts and feelings, since they can lead us to disobey God. (Romans 7:21-25) But our love for Jehovah gives us the strength to do what is right. He sees our efforts to obey him, and he helps us by giving us his powerful holy spirit. (1 Samuel 15:22, 23; Acts 5:32) Holy spirit helps us to develop qualities that make it easier for us to obey him.—Galatians 5: 22, 23.

**17** In this publication, we will learn how to live in a way that pleases Jehovah. We will learn how to apply his principles and moral standards in our own lives. Remember that Jehovah never forces us to obey him. When we choose to be obedient, our life will improve and we will have a wonderful future. Most important, our obedience will show God just how much we love him.—See Endnote 4.

**18** To help us know what is right and what is wrong, Jehovah has given each of us a conscience. If we train our conscience, it can help us to “observe his commandments.” So, what is our conscience, and how do we train it? Let us see.

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16. How do we know that we can be obedient even though we are imperfect and live in a wicked world?

17, 18. (a) What will we learn in this publication? (b) What will we discuss in the next chapter?

## 1 GOD LOVES YOU

“Keep yourselves in God’s love . . . with everlasting life in view.”—Jude 21

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### What convinces you that God loves you?

**John 3:16;**

**1 John 4:8-10;**

**Revelation 4:11**

Jehovah created everything on earth so that we could enjoy life. After Adam and Eve sinned, God’s purpose did not change. He gave his Son as a ransom so that all humans could have the opportunity for everlasting life.

**Psalm 65:2;**

**Acts 5:32**

To help us in our lives even now, Jehovah has given us the Bible, his holy spirit, and the gift of prayer. When we pray to him, he is listening to us.

## 2 OBEYING JEHOVAH ALWAYS BENEFITS US

“I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself.”—Isaiah 48:17

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### How will you benefit by obeying Jehovah?

#### **Deuteronomy 5:28-33; 6:24**

Jehovah sees our efforts to obey him. Obedience improves our life now and makes a wonderful future possible for us.



### 3 YOU CAN SHOW JEHOVAH THAT YOU LOVE HIM

“This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments.”—1 John 5:3

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#### Is it possible for us to obey God?

**Deuteronomy 30:11;**

**Psalm 103:14**

Jehovah knows that we are imperfect. He doesn't ask us to do anything that we are not capable of doing.

**Proverbs 27:11;**

**Romans 7:21-25**

Our love for Jehovah gives us the strength to obey him even when it's difficult.

**Proverbs 6:16-19;**

**Ephesians 5:17**

Bible principles teach us God's thoughts. These principles can mold our thinking and deepen our love for Jehovah. They help us know what to do even when the Bible does not specifically tell us.

## A GOOD CONSCIENCE WITH GOD

“Maintain a good conscience.”

—1 PETER 3:16.

IMAGINE that you are walking across a vast desert. The landscape keeps changing as strong winds blow the sand in different directions. You could easily get lost. How will you know which direction to go? You need someone or something to guide you. It could be a compass, the sun and stars, a map, a GPS (Global Positioning System), or even a person who knows

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1, 2. Why do you need a guide when you are in an unfamiliar place? What guide has Jehovah given us?



the desert well. Having a guide is important, because knowing where to go can save your life.

<sup>2</sup> We all face many challenges in life, and at times we could easily feel lost. But to guide us, Jehovah has given each one of us a conscience. (James 1:17) Let's find out what the conscience is and how it works. Then we will learn how we can train our conscience, why we should care about the consciences of other people, and how a clean conscience can make our life much better.

### **WHAT IS OUR CONSCIENCE AND HOW DOES IT WORK?**

<sup>3</sup> Our conscience is a wonderful gift from Jehovah. It is the sense of right and wrong that we have inside us. The Greek word used in the Bible for "conscience" means "knowledge with oneself." When our conscience works well, it helps us examine the person we really are. It can help us to be honest about our deepest thoughts and feelings. It can guide us toward good and away from bad. And it can make us feel happy when we make a wise decision or guilty after we make a bad one.—See Endnote 5.

<sup>4</sup> Each of us can choose whether or not we will listen to our conscience. Adam and Eve chose not to listen to their conscience, and as a result they

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3. What is our conscience?

4, 5. (a) What happened when Adam and Eve ignored their conscience? (b) What are some Bible examples of how the conscience works?

sinned. Afterward they felt guilty, but it was too late. They had already disobeyed God. (Genesis 3: 7, 8) Even though they each had a perfect conscience and knew that it was wrong to disobey God, they chose to ignore their conscience.

<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, many imperfect humans have listened to their conscience. Job was a good example. Because he made good decisions, he could say: "My heart will not condemn me as long as I live." (Job 27:6) When Job spoke of his "heart," he referred to his conscience, his sense of right and wrong. David, though, ignored his conscience at times and disobeyed Jehovah. Afterward he felt so guilty that it was as if his heart were "striking him." (1 Samuel 24:5) This was David's conscience telling him that what he had done was wrong. By listening to his conscience, he could learn to avoid making the same mistake again.

<sup>6</sup> Even people who do not know Jehovah usually realize that there are things that are right and things that are wrong. The Bible says: "By their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused." (Romans 2:14, 15) For example, most people know that it is wrong to murder or to steal. Though they may not realize it, they are actually listening to their conscience, the sense of right and wrong that Jehovah put inside of them. They are also following God's principles, or the basic truths Jehovah has provided to help us to make good choices in life.

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6. Why can we say that our conscience is a gift from God?

<sup>7</sup> But our conscience can sometimes be wrong. For example, it could be damaged by our own imperfect thoughts and feelings and could guide us in the wrong direction. A good conscience does not come automatically. (Genesis 39:1, 2, 7-12) It needs to be trained. To help us, Jehovah gives us holy spirit and Bible principles. (Romans 9:1) Let's examine how we can train our conscience.

### HOW CAN WE TRAIN OUR CONSCIENCE?

<sup>8</sup> Some people think that listening to their conscience simply means following their feelings. They think that they can do whatever they want as long as they feel good about it. But our feelings are imperfect, and they can mislead us. Our feelings can be so powerful that they affect our conscience. The Bible says: "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) So we may begin to think that something is right even though it is wrong. For example, before Paul became a Christian, he viciously persecuted God's people and believed that what he was doing was right. In his opinion, he had a good conscience. But he later said: "The one who examines me is Jehovah." (1 Corinthians 4:4; Acts 23:1; 2 Timothy 1:3) When Paul learned how Jehovah felt about what he was doing, he realized that he

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7. Why may our conscience sometimes be wrong?

8. (a) How can our feelings affect our conscience? (b) What should we ask ourselves before we make a decision?

needed to change. Clearly, before we do something, we need to ask ourselves, 'What does Jehovah want me to do?'

<sup>9</sup> When you love someone, you don't want to displease him or her. Because we love Jehovah, we don't want to do anything that will displease him. Our fear of displeasing Jehovah needs to be very strong. We see this from Nehemiah's example. He refused to use his position as governor to get rich. Why? He explained that it was "because of the fear of God." (Nehemiah 5:15) Nehemiah did not want to do anything that would displease Jehovah. Like Nehemiah, we too are afraid of displeasing Jehovah by doing something wrong. We can learn what pleases Jehovah by reading the Bible. —See Endnote 6.

<sup>10</sup> For example, a Christian may need to decide whether or not he will drink alcohol. What principles will help him to make a good decision? Here are a few: The Bible does not condemn drinking alcohol. In fact, it tells us that wine is a gift from God. (Psalm 104:14, 15) However, Jesus told his followers not to get involved in "heavy drinking." (Luke 21:34) And Paul told Christians to avoid "wild parties and drunkenness." (Romans 13:13) He said that drunkards "will not inherit God's Kingdom." —1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

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9. What does it mean to fear God?

10, 11. What Bible principles can help us make good decisions regarding alcohol?

**11** A Christian might ask himself: 'How important is alcohol to me? Do I need it to relax? Do I drink alcohol to feel more confident? Can I control how much and how often I drink?\*' Can I still have a good time with friends if there is no alcohol served?' We can ask Jehovah to help us make wise choices. (**Read Psalm 139:23, 24.**) In this way, we train our conscience to be sensitive to Bible principles. But more is involved, as we will see.

### WHY WE CARE ABOUT THE CONSCIENCES OF OTHERS

**12** Not everyone's conscience is the same. Your conscience may allow you to do something that someone else's does not. For example, you may choose to drink alcohol, while another person feels he should not. Why might two people feel differently about this?

**13** A person's feelings about something are often influenced by where he grew up, how his family viewed it, his own experiences in life, and other factors. When it comes to alcohol, perhaps someone who had trouble controlling his drinking in the past chooses not to drink at all. (1 Kings 8:38, 39) So if you offered someone an alcoholic drink and

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\* Many doctors say that it is especially difficult for alcoholics to control how much they drink. Doctors suggest that they do not drink alcohol at all.

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12, 13. Why might our conscience be different from the consciences of others? How can we handle these differences?

he refused, how would you react? Would you feel offended? Would you keep insisting? Would you demand to know why he refused? No, because you respect his conscience.

<sup>14</sup> In the apostle Paul's day, a situation arose that showed how consciences can be different. Some of the meat sold in the markets had been used in false worship and offered to idols. (1 Corinthians 10:25) Paul didn't think that it was wrong to buy and eat this meat. To him, all food came from Jehovah. But some brothers who had worshipped idols in the past felt differently. They felt it was wrong to eat the meat. Did Paul think: 'It doesn't bother my conscience. I have the right to eat what I want'?

<sup>15</sup> Paul did not think like that. The feelings of his brothers were so important to him that he was willing to give up some of his personal rights. Paul said that we should not "be pleasing ourselves." He added: "For even the Christ did not please himself." (Romans 15:1, 3) Like Jesus, Paul cared more about others than about himself.—**Read 1 Corinthians 8:13; 10:23, 24, 31-33.**

<sup>16</sup> But what if another person's conscience lets him do something that seems wrong to us? We need to be very careful not to be critical and insist that we are right and he is wrong. (**Read Romans**

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14, 15. What situation existed in Paul's day? What good advice did Paul give?

16. Why shouldn't we judge our brother for what his conscience allows him to do?





A trained conscience can help you to decide whether or not you will drink alcohol

**14:10.)** Jehovah gave us our conscience to judge ourselves, not to judge others. (Matthew 7:1) We never want our personal choices to cause division in the congregation. Instead, we look for ways to promote love and unity.—Romans 14:19.

### **WE CAN BENEFIT FROM A GOOD CONSCIENCE**

<sup>17</sup> The apostle Peter wrote: “Maintain a good conscience.” (1 Peter 3:16) Sadly, when people keep ignoring Jehovah’s principles, eventually their

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17. What has happened to some people’s conscience?

A good conscience  
can guide us in life  
and bring us joy  
and inner peace



conscience does not warn them anymore. Paul said that such a conscience has been “seared as with a branding iron.” (1 Timothy 4:2) Have you ever been badly burned? When that happens, your skin becomes so scarred that you cannot feel anything there. If a person continues to do wrong things, his conscience can become “seared” and, in time, stop working.

**18** When we feel guilty, our conscience may be telling us that we have done something wrong. This can help us to identify what we did and to stop doing it. We want to learn from our mistakes so

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18, 19. (a) What do feelings of guilt or shame teach us? (b) What can we do if we feel guilty about sins for which we have repented?



that we do not repeat them. For example, though King David sinned, his conscience moved him to repent. He hated what he had done and was determined to obey Jehovah in the future. David could say from personal experience that Jehovah is “good and ready to forgive.”—Psalm 51:1-19; 86:5; see Endnote 7.

**19** But long after a person has repented of a sin, he may still feel guilty about what he has done. Feelings of guilt can be painful and can make someone feel worthless. If this is how you feel at times, remember that you cannot change what happened in the past. Whether or not you clearly understood at the time what was right or wrong, Jehovah

completely forgave you, and those sins were erased. You are clean before Jehovah and know that you are now doing what is right. Your heart may still condemn you, but the Bible says: "God is greater than our hearts." (Read 1 John 3:19, 20.) This means that his love and forgiveness are stronger than any feelings of guilt or shame we may have. You can be sure that Jehovah has forgiven you. When a person accepts Jehovah's forgiveness, his conscience will be at peace and he can be happy serving God. —1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:22.

<sup>20</sup> This publication is designed to help you train your conscience so that it can warn and protect you during these difficult last days. It will also help you apply Bible principles to various situations in your life. Of course, this publication will not give us a list of rules for what to do in every situation. We live by "the law of the Christ," which is based on God's principles. (Galatians 6:2) We do not use the fact that there is no specific law about a matter as an excuse to do what is wrong. (2 Corinthians 4:1, 2; Hebrews 4:13; 1 Peter 2:16) Instead, we use our freedom to show our love for Jehovah.

<sup>21</sup> When we meditate on Bible principles and apply them, we learn to use our "powers of discernment" and think as Jehovah thinks. (Hebrews 5:14) The result is a trained conscience that will guide us through life and help us remain in God's love.

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20, 21. (a) What is this publication designed to help you to do? (b) What freedom has Jehovah given us? How should we use it?

## **1** OUR CONSCIENCE IS A GIFT FROM GOD

“By their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused.”—Romans 2:14, 15

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### How can your conscience help you?

#### **Psalm 139:23, 24**

Our conscience is the sense of right and wrong inside us. It helps us to be honest with ourselves about our deepest thoughts and feelings.

#### **1 Samuel 24:5;**

#### **Job 27:6**

Our conscience can guide us toward good and away from bad. It makes us feel guilty after we've made a bad decision or happy when we've made a wise one.

## 2 OUR CONSCIENCE NEEDS TO BE TRAINED

“The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate.”—Jeremiah 17:9

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**What has Jehovah given us to help us train our conscience?**

**Romans 9:1;**

**1 Corinthians 4:4**

Our imperfect conscience can be wrong. It needs to be guided by holy spirit, not just by how we feel.

**Hebrews 5:14;**

**1 Peter 3:16**

In the Bible, we learn Jehovah’s thoughts, which help us know right from wrong and help us to train our conscience.

### 3 NOT EVERYONE'S CONSCIENCE IS THE SAME

“Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person.”—1 Corinthians 10:23, 24

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**How can we show respect for the consciences of others?**

#### **Romans 15:1, 3**

Not everyone's conscience works in the same way. Your conscience may allow you to do something that someone else's does not.

#### **1 Corinthians 10:31-33**

The apostle Paul cared more about his brothers and sisters than about himself. Their feelings were far more important to him than his own preferences.

#### **Romans 14:10, 19**

Jehovah gave us our conscience to judge ourselves, not to judge others. We need to be very careful not to insist that we are right and others are wrong.

## 4 JEHOVAH CAN HELP US TO HAVE A GOOD CONSCIENCE

“We will assure our hearts before him . . . because God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.”—1 John 3:19, 20

**Why should we not give up if we keep feeling guilty about something in our past?**

**Psalm 86:5;**

**1 Corinthians 6:11**

Feelings of guilt over past sins may be very painful and may cause us to feel worthless long after we have repented. But we cannot change the past. Jehovah forgave us, and those sins are erased. We can be clean before him.

**Galatians 6:2;**

**1 Peter 2:16**

“The law of the Christ” is based on Bible principles and not on laws. Even when there is no law about a matter, a Christian does not look for a way to do what is wrong.



## CHOOSE FRIENDS WHO LOVE GOD

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

HAVE you ever noticed how a baby watches his parents? Even before he can talk, he is absorbing all that he sees and hears. As he gets older, he begins to imitate his parents even without trying to. It is not surprising that adults too may begin to think and act like the people they spend a lot of time with.

<sup>2</sup> From Proverbs 13:20, we learn: “The one walking with the wise will become wise.” Here, the idea of “walking with” someone involves choosing to spend time with him. This means more than just being around a person. One Bible scholar said that walking with someone includes the idea of loving that person and feeling close to him. We are influenced most by the people we spend a lot of time with, especially if we feel close to them.

<sup>3</sup> Our friends can affect us in a good way or in a bad way. Proverbs 13:20 continues: “The one who has dealings with the stupid will fare badly.” In the

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1-3. (a) What do we learn from Proverbs 13:20? (b) Why do we need to choose our friends wisely?

Hebrew language, to have “dealings with” someone can mean to “keep company” with that person, that is, to be friends with him. (Proverbs 22:24; Judges 14:20) Friends who love God will encourage us to remain faithful to him. To help us choose our friends wisely, let's discuss what type of people Jehovah selects as his friends.

### WHO ARE GOD'S FRIENDS?

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah, the Sovereign of the Universe, gives us the opportunity to be his friends. This is a great honor. Jehovah selects his friends carefully. He chooses those who love him and have faith in him. Think of Abraham. He was ready to do anything for God. Over and over again, Abraham showed that he was faithful and obedient. He was even willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. Abraham had faith that “God was able to raise him up even from the dead.” (Hebrews 11:17-19; Genesis 22:1, 2, 9-13) Abraham was faithful and obedient, and Jehovah called him “my friend.”—Isaiah 41:8; James 2:21-23.

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah views his friends as precious. His friends care more about being loyal to him than about anything else. (**Read 2 Samuel 22:26.**) They are loyal and obedient because they love him. The Bible says that God's “close friendship is with the upright,” those who obey him. (Proverbs 3:32) Jehovah invites his friends to be special guests in his

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4. Why is it a great honor to be a friend of God? Why did Jehovah call Abraham “my friend”?

5. How does Jehovah feel about those who are loyal to him?

“tent.” He invites them to worship him and to pray to him at any time.—Psalm 15:1-5.

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said: “If anyone loves me, he will observe my word, and my Father will love him.” (John 14:23) So to be Jehovah’s friend, we also need to love Jesus and do what he taught us to do. For example, we obey Jesus’ instructions to preach the good news and make disciples. (Matthew 28:19, 20; John 14:15, 21) Because we love Jesus, we “follow his steps closely.” (1 Peter 2:21) Jehovah is happy when he sees us doing our best to imitate his Son in all we say and do.

<sup>7</sup> Jehovah’s friends are faithful, loyal, and obedient, and they love his Son. Do we choose the same kind of friends that Jehovah does? If your friends imitate Jesus and are busy teaching others about God’s Kingdom, they can help you to be a better person and to remain loyal to Jehovah.

### LEARNING FROM BIBLE EXAMPLES

<sup>8</sup> In the Bible, we can read about many friendships, such as the friendship between Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. These women came from different lands and backgrounds, and Naomi was much older than Ruth. But they became close friends because they both loved Jehovah. When Naomi wanted to leave the land of Moab and return to

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6. How can we show that we love Jesus?

7. Why should we make sure that our friends are Jehovah’s friends?

8. What do you like about the friendship between Ruth and Naomi?

Israel, "Ruth stuck with her." She told Naomi: "Your people will be my people, and your God my God." (Ruth 1:14, 16) Ruth was very kind to Naomi. When they arrived in Israel, Ruth worked hard to support her friend. Naomi loved Ruth very much and gave her good advice. Ruth listened to her, and as a result, they both received many blessings.—Ruth 3:6.

<sup>9</sup> David and Jonathan are another example of good friends who were both loyal to Jehovah. Jonathan was about 30 years older than David and was next in line to be king of Israel. (1 Samuel 17:33; 31:2; 2 Samuel 5:4) Yet, when he learned that Jehovah had chosen David to be king, he did not feel jealous or competitive. Instead, Jonathan did everything he could to support David. For example, when David was in danger, Jonathan helped him "find strength in Jehovah." He even risked his life for David. (1 Samuel 23:16, 17) David too was a loyal friend. He promised to take care of Jonathan's family, and he kept that promise even after Jonathan died.—1 Samuel 18:1; 20:15-17, 30-34; 2 Samuel 9:1-7.

<sup>10</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were three young Hebrew friends who were taken away from home as children. Far from their families, they

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9. What impresses you about the friendship between David and Jonathan?

10. What do you learn about friendship from the example of the three Hebrews?

helped one another to remain faithful to Jehovah. Later, as adults, their faith was tested when King Nebuchadnezzar commanded them to worship an image of gold. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the image and told the king: “We will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold that you have set up.” When their faith was tested, these three friends remained loyal to their God.—Daniel 1:1-17; 3:12, 16-28.

<sup>11</sup> When the apostle Paul met the young man Timothy, he could see that Timothy loved Jehovah and really cared about the congregation. So Paul trained Timothy to help the brothers and sisters in many different places. (Acts 16:1-8; 17:10-14) Timothy worked so hard that Paul said: “He slaved with me to advance the good news.” Paul knew that Timothy would “genuinely care” for the brothers and sisters. As they worked hard together serving Jehovah, Paul and Timothy became good friends.—Philippians 2:20-22; 1 Corinthians 4:17.

### HOW TO CHOOSE OUR FRIENDS

<sup>12</sup> In the congregation, we can learn from our brothers and sisters and help one another to stay faithful. (**Read Romans 1:11, 12.**) But even in the congregation, we need to be careful about whom we choose to be our close friends. We have a

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11. How do we know that Paul and Timothy were good friends?  
 12, 13. (a) Why do we need to choose our friends carefully even in the congregation? (b) Why did the apostle Paul give the warning at 1 Corinthians 15:33?

wonderful variety of brothers and sisters from many cultures and backgrounds. Some are new to the congregation, while others have been serving Jehovah for many years. It takes time for a person's relationship with Jehovah to grow, just as it takes time for fruit to ripen. So we need to show patience and love to one another and always choose our friends wisely.—Romans 14:1; 15:1; Hebrews 5:12–6:3.

<sup>13</sup> At times, a serious situation may arise in the congregation, and we will need to be especially

You can find  
good friends who  
love Jehovah



careful. It could be that a brother or a sister is doing things that the Bible says are wrong. Or someone may develop a complaining attitude that could damage the congregation. This does not surprise us, because even in the first century, there were problems in the congregation at times. In fact, the apostle Paul warned Christians back then: “Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits.” (1 Corinthians 15:12, 33) Paul also warned Timothy to be careful about whom he chose to be his close friends. We should do the same today.—**Read 2 Timothy 2:20-22.**

<sup>14</sup> We must protect our relationship with Jehovah. It is the most precious thing we have. So we avoid being close friends with anyone who could weaken our faith and damage that relationship. Just as we cannot soak a sponge in vinegar and expect it to become filled with water, we cannot have friends who do wrong things and expect that it will be easy for us to do right things. We need to choose our close friends carefully.—1 Corinthians 5:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 7, 14.

<sup>15</sup> In the congregation, you can find people who truly love Jehovah. They can become your close friends. (Psalm 133:1) Don't look for friends only among people of your own age or background. Remember that Jonathan was much older than David,

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14. How can our choice of friends affect our relationship with Jehovah?

15. What can you do to make good friends in the congregation?

and Ruth was much younger than Naomi. We want to follow the Bible's advice: "Open your hearts wide." (2 Corinthians 6:13; **read 1 Peter 2:17.**) And the more you imitate Jehovah, the more others will want to be your friend.

### WHEN THERE ARE PROBLEMS

**16** In every family, there are different personalities, opinions, and ways of doing things. This is also true in a congregation. This variety makes life interesting, and we can learn a lot from one another. But sometimes our differences cause us to misunderstand our brothers or sisters and become irritated with them. At times, we may get offended or our feelings may get hurt. (Proverbs 12:18) Should we let such problems discourage us or keep us away from the congregation?

**17** No. Even if someone disappoints us in some way, we would not stay away from the congregation. Jehovah is not the one who offended us. He gave us life and all other things. He deserves our love and loyalty. (Revelation 4:11) The congregation is a gift from Jehovah that helps us to keep our faith strong. (Hebrews 13:17) We would never reject his gift just because someone disappointed us. —**Read Psalm 119:165.**

**18** We love our brothers and sisters and want to

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16, 17. If someone in the congregation upsets us, what should we avoid doing?

18. (a) What can help us to get along with our brothers and sisters? (b) Why should we forgive others?



get along with them. Jehovah does not expect any human to be perfect, and neither should we. (Proverbs 17:9; 1 Peter 4:8) We all make mistakes, but love will help us to keep “forgiving one another freely.” (Colossians 3:13) Love will stop us from turning a small misunderstanding into a huge problem. True, when someone has upset us, it can be difficult to stop thinking about it. It is easy to become angry and hold a grudge against that person. But this will only make us unhappy and bitter. On the other hand, when we forgive someone who offended us, we can have peace of mind, unity in the congregation and, most important, a good relationship with Jehovah.—Matthew 6:14, 15; Luke 17:3, 4; Romans 14:19.

### WHEN SOMEONE IS DISFELLOWSHIPED

**19** In a loving family, each member does his part to make the others happy. But imagine that one person rebels. Everybody in the family tries again and again to help him, but he rejects the help. He may decide to leave home, or the head of the family may have to ask him to leave. Something similar can happen in the congregation. A person may choose to keep doing things that displease Jehovah and harm the congregation. He rejects help and shows by his actions that he no longer wants

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19. When do we need to stop associating with someone in the congregation?

to be part of the congregation. He may choose to leave the congregation himself, or he may have to be disfellowshipped. If this happens, the Bible clearly says that we should “stop keeping company” with him. (Read 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 2 John 9-11) This can be very difficult if he is a friend of ours or a member of our family. But in a situation like this, our loyalty to Jehovah must be stronger than our loyalty to anyone else.—See Endnote 8.

<sup>20</sup> The disfellowshipping arrangement is a loving provision from Jehovah. It keeps the congregation safe from those who do not care about Jehovah's standards. (1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 12:15, 16) It helps us to show love for Jehovah's holy name, for his high standards, and for Jehovah himself. (1 Peter 1:15, 16) And the disfellowshipping arrangement shows love for the person who is no longer a member of the congregation. This strong discipline may help him to realize that what he is doing is wrong and motivate him to change. Many who were once disfellowshipped later returned to Jehovah and were warmly welcomed back into the congregation.—Hebrews 12:11.

<sup>21</sup> In one way or another, our friends affect us. So it is important that we choose them carefully. If we love those whom Jehovah loves, we will be surrounded by people who can help us to stay faithful to him forever.

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20, 21. (a) How does the disfellowshipping arrangement show love? (b) Why is it important that we choose our friends wisely?

## **1** YOU CAN BE JEHOVAH'S FRIEND

“Abraham . . . came to be called Jehovah's friend.”—James 2:23

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### How can we be Jehovah's friends?

**2 Samuel 22:26;**

**Psalms 15:1-5;**

**John 14:21**

Jehovah chooses friends who love him, obey him, and are loyal to him.

**Proverbs 13:20;**

**1 Corinthians 15:33;**

**2 Timothy 2:22**

We often become like the people we spend time with.

## 2 WE SHOULD CHOOSE FRIENDS WHO LOVE JEHOVAH

“His close friendship is with the upright.”

—Proverbs 3:32

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### How can we choose our friends wisely?

**Romans 1:11, 12;**

**2 Corinthians 6:13;**

**1 Peter 2:17**

Our friends may come from different cultures and backgrounds. What is important is that our friends love Jehovah.

**Ruth 1:14, 16;**

**1 Samuel 18:1;**

**Philippians 2:20-22**

The Bible contains many examples of good friends.

### 3 BE THE KIND OF FRIEND JEHOVAH WANTS YOU TO BE

“A true friend shows love at all times, and is a brother who is born for times of distress.”—Proverbs 17:17

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**What can we do if we have a disagreement with a friend?**

**Psalm 133:1;**

**Matthew 6:14, 15;**

**Romans 14:19**

Take the first step to make peace and maintain unity.

**Proverbs 17:9;**

**Colossians 3:13;**

**1 Peter 4:8**

Love will stop us from turning a small misunderstanding into a huge problem. It will help us to be forgiving and loyal.

**Psalm 141:5;**

**Proverbs 27:6**

Remember that a real friend is not afraid to tell you the truth about yourself.

**Proverbs 12:18; 18:24;**

**1 John 3:16-18**

Stay close to your friends by being a good friend yourself.

## 4 OUR STRONGEST LOYALTY IS OUR LOYALTY TO JEHOVAH

“True, no discipline seems for the present to be joyous, . . . yet afterward, it yields . . . righteousness.”—Hebrews 12:11

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**What should we do if a friend chooses to reject Jehovah?**

**1 Corinthians 5:11-13;**

**2 John 9-11**

If a friend chooses to keep doing bad things and rejects help, he shows that he no longer wants to be part of the congregation.

**1 Peter 1:15, 16**

The disfellowshipping arrangement shows love for Jehovah, his name, and his standards.

## WHY RESPECT AUTHORITY?

“Honor men of all sorts, have love for the whole association of brothers, be in fear of God, honor the king.”—1 PETER 2:17.

WHEN you were a child, there were probably times when your parents asked you to do something that you didn't want to do. You loved your parents and knew that you should obey them. Still, you probably didn't always **want** to obey them.

<sup>2</sup> We know that Jehovah, our Father, loves us. He takes care of us and makes sure that we have everything we need to enjoy life. He gives us the direction we need to be successful. At times, he uses other people to give us direction. We need to respect Jehovah's authority. (Proverbs 24:21) But why is it sometimes difficult for us to accept direction? Why does Jehovah ask us to follow direction? And how do we show that we respect his authority?—See Endnote 9.

### WHY IS IT DIFFICULT?

<sup>3</sup> As humans, we have a tendency to be rebellious. This has been true ever since the first man and

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1, 2. (a) Whose direction do we need to follow? (b) What questions will we discuss in this chapter?

3, 4. How did humans become imperfect? Why can it be difficult for us to accept direction from others?

woman, Adam and Eve, sinned. Even though they were created perfect, they rebelled against God's authority. Since then, all humans have been born imperfect. Our imperfection is one reason why it can be difficult for us to accept direction from Jehovah and from humans. Another reason is that those whom Jehovah uses to give us direction are also imperfect humans.—Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12.

<sup>4</sup> Because we are imperfect, we tend to be proud. Pride makes it difficult for us to accept direction. For example, in ancient Israel, Jehovah chose Moses to lead His people. A man named Korah, who had served Jehovah for many years, became proud and showed great disrespect to Moses. Although Moses was leading God's people, he was not a proud man. In fact, he was described as the most humble man alive at the time. But Korah could not accept Moses' direction. He even convinced a large crowd to join him and rebel against Moses. What happened to Korah and the rebels? They were killed. (Numbers 12:3; 16:1-3, 31-35) In the Bible, we find many examples that teach us that pride is dangerous.—2 Chronicles 26:16-21; see Endnote 10.

<sup>5</sup> You may have heard the expression, "Power corrupts." Throughout history, many humans have abused their power. (**Read Ecclesiastes 8:9.**) For example, Saul was a good and humble man when

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5. How have some humans abused their power?



Jehovah chose him to be king of Israel. But he allowed pride and jealousy to grow in his heart, and this led him to persecute David, an innocent man. (1 Samuel 9:20, 21; 10:20-22; 18:7-11) Later, David became king, and he was one of the best kings Israel ever had. Still, in time, even David abused his power. He had sexual relations with Bath-sheba, the wife of a man named Uriah, and then tried to hide his sin by sending Uriah to be killed in battle. —2 Samuel 11:1-17.

### WHY WE RESPECT JEHOVAH'S AUTHORITY

<sup>6</sup> We respect direction from Jehovah because we love him. Because we love Jehovah more than anything or anyone else, we want to make him happy. (Read Proverbs 27:11; Mark 12:29, 30.) From the time the first human couple lived in the garden of Eden, Satan has wanted people to question Jehovah's authority. The Devil wants us to think that Jehovah does not have the right to tell us what to do. But we know this is a lie. We agree with these words: "You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things."—Revelation 4:11.

<sup>7</sup> When you were a child, you were probably taught to obey your parents even when you didn't want to. In a similar way, as servants of Jehovah,

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6, 7. (a) What does our love for Jehovah motivate us to do? (b) What will help us to be obedient even when it is not easy to do so?

there may be times when it is not easy to be obedient. But we love and respect Jehovah, so we do all we can to obey him. Jesus set the example for us. He obeyed Jehovah even when it was not easy or convenient to do so. That is why he could say to his Father: "Let, not my will, but yours take place."—Luke 22:42; see Endnote 11.

<sup>8</sup> Today, Jehovah directs us in different ways. For example, he has given us the Bible. He has also given us the congregation elders. We show that we respect Jehovah's authority when we respect those he uses to direct us. If we reject their help, in a sense we are rejecting Jehovah. When the Israelites rejected Moses, Jehovah viewed it seriously. He viewed it as if they were rejecting him.—Numbers 14:26, 27; see Endnote 12.

<sup>9</sup> When we respect authority, it shows that we also love our brothers and sisters. Think of it this way. When there is a natural disaster, often a relief team works together to save as many people as possible. For the team to be effective, someone needs to organize it and each member of the team needs to follow direction. But what if one person ignores the direction and simply does what he wants? Even if his motives are good, his refusal to listen could cause problems for his teammates, possibly causing them to get seriously hurt. In a similar way,

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8. What are some ways that Jehovah directs us? (See the box "Listen to Advice.")

9. How will love move us to follow direction?

## LISTEN TO ADVICE

FROM time to time, someone may give us advice based on Bible principles. Here are three reasons why it may not be easy to accept advice.—Proverbs 19:20.

- **We feel that the advice does not apply to us.** Perhaps we think that the person who spoke to us does not really understand our situation. (Hebrews 12:5) But ask yourself whether there was a good reason the person said what he did. (Proverbs 19:3) When you understand the reason for the advice, it may be easier to accept it.—**Read Proverbs 4:13.**
- **We do not like how the advice was given.** Only a perfect person could give us perfect advice in a perfect way. (Romans 3:23; James 3:2) Instead of focusing on the way someone gives advice, focus on what he is saying and think about how you can apply it.
- **We think we don't need advice because of our age or experience.** In ancient Israel, even the king received advice from prophets, priests, and others in his kingdom. (2 Samuel 12:1-13; 2 Chronicles 26:16-20) When we humbly accept advice that is based on the Bible, it will help us to grow closer to Jehovah.—Titus 3:2.

Remember that advice based on the Bible is a gift from Jehovah, who loves us and wants what is best for us. Do your best to accept and apply it.—Hebrews 12:6-11.



if we don't follow direction from Jehovah and those to whom he has given some authority, others may suffer. But when we obey Jehovah, we show that we love our brothers and respect Jehovah's arrangement.—1 Corinthians 12:14, 25, 26.

**10** Whatever Jehovah asks us to do is for our good. When we show respect for authority in our family, in the congregation, and in dealing with government officials, all will benefit.—Deuteronomy 5:16; Romans 13:4; Ephesians 6:2, 3; Hebrews 13:17.

**11** Understanding why Jehovah wants us to show respect to others can help us to do so. Let's discuss in more detail how we can show respect in three areas of life.

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10, 11. What will we now discuss?

As he cares for his family, a Christian father imitates Christ



## RESPECT IN THE FAMILY

**12** Jehovah created the family and gave each family member a role. When each member understands what Jehovah expects of him or her, the family arrangement will work well and the whole family will benefit. (1 Corinthians 14:33) Jehovah has made the husband the head of the family. This means that Jehovah expects him to take care of and lovingly guide his wife and children. So a husband must answer to Jehovah for how he cares for them. A Christian husband is kind and loving and treats his family the way Jesus treats the congregation. When a husband does this, he shows that he respects Jehovah.—Ephesians 5:23; see Endnote 13.

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12. How can a husband show that he respects authority?

**13** A Christian wife also has an important and dignified role. She supports her husband as he works hard to be a good family head. Together with him, she has the responsibility to train the children. One way she teaches her children to be respectful is by her own example. (Proverbs 1:8) She respects her husband and cooperates with his decisions. Even when she does not agree with him about something, she explains her feelings in a kind and respectful way. When a Christian woman is married to a non-Witness, she has unique challenges. But if she continues to treat her husband with love and respect, perhaps one day he too will want to know Jehovah and worship him.—**Read 1 Peter 3:1.**

**14** Children are precious to Jehovah, and they especially need protection and guidance. When children obey their parents, they make their parents happy. Even more important, by being obedient they show respect to Jehovah and make him happy. (Proverbs 10:1) In many families, children are being raised by only one parent. This can be very difficult for both the parent and the children. But when the children are obedient and support their mother or father, family life will be much better. Whatever the situation, no family is perfect. But every family can be happier when each member follows Jehovah's direction. This brings glory to Jehovah, the Creator of all families.—Ephesians 3:14, 15.

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13. How can a wife show that she respects authority?

14. How can children show respect for authority?

## RESPECT IN THE CONGREGATION

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah directs us by means of the Christian congregation, and he has given Jesus full authority over it. (Colossians 1:18) In turn, Jesus has given “the faithful and discreet slave” the responsibility to care for God’s people on earth. (Matthew 24:45-47) Today, “the faithful and discreet slave” is the Governing Body. The Governing Body provides what we need at the right time to help keep our faith strong. Elders, ministerial servants, and circuit overseers support congregations around the world and receive direction from the Governing Body. All these brothers have the responsibility to take care of us. They answer to Jehovah for how they handle this responsibility. So when we respect these men, we respect Jehovah.—**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17;** see Endnote 14.

<sup>16</sup> Elders and ministerial servants help the congregation stay faithful and united. Of course, they are imperfect humans just like us. So how are they selected? These brothers must meet the qualifications found in the Bible. (1 Timothy 3:1-7, 12; Titus 1:5-9) Jehovah used holy spirit to help Bible writers explain these qualifications. The elders pray to Jehovah for his holy spirit when discussing who should be appointed as an elder or a ministerial servant. Clearly, the congregations are under the

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15. How can we show that we respect authority in the congregation?

16. Why can we say that elders and ministerial servants are appointed by holy spirit?

direction of Jesus and Jehovah. (Acts 20:28) The men appointed to support and care for us are gifts from God.—Ephesians 4:8.

**17** Sometimes there may not be any elders or ministerial servants available to handle an assignment in the congregation. Other baptized brothers can usually help, but if none are available, a sister may need to do a task that would usually be done by a baptized brother. If that is the case, she would wear something to cover her head, perhaps a scarf or a hat. (1 Corinthians 11:3-10) In this way, she shows that she respects Jehovah's arrangement of headship, both in the family and in the congregation.—See Endnote 15.

### RESPECT FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

**18** Today, Jehovah allows governments to have some authority, and we should respect them. They organize countries and communities so that they function smoothly and provide people with necessary services. Christians obey the instruction found at **Romans 13:1-7**. (**Read.**) We respect “the superior authorities” and obey the laws of the country or community where we live. These laws may affect our family, business, or possessions. For example, we pay taxes and provide information that the government requires. But what should we do

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17. To show respect, what might a sister sometimes need to do?

18, 19. (a) What do we learn from Romans 13:1-7? (b) How do we show respect for governments?



if the government asks us to do something that goes against God's laws? The apostle Peter said: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5: 28, 29.

**19** If we must deal with a government official, such as a judge or a policeman, we should always be respectful. Young Christians show respect to their teachers and other school employees. At our place of work, we show respect to our employer, even if other employees do not. When we do this, we imitate the apostle Paul, who was respectful to officials although it was sometimes difficult. (Acts 26:2, 25) Even if others do not treat us well, we remain respectful.—**Read Romans 12:17, 18; 1 Peter 3:15.**

**20** All over the world, people show less and less respect for others. But Jehovah's people are different. We make it our goal to respect everyone. We follow the direction of the apostle Peter: "Honor men of all sorts." (1 Peter 2:17) When we respect others, they notice. Jesus told us: "Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father."—Matthew 5:16.

**21** When we show respect in our family, in our congregation, and in other areas of life, our good example may make others want to learn more about Jehovah. And by showing respect to others, we show respect to Jehovah himself. This makes Jehovah happy and shows him that we love him.

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20, 21. What good things can happen when we show respect for others?

## 1 JEHOVAH USES OTHER PEOPLE TO DIRECT US

“Honor men of all sorts, . . . be in fear of God.”—1 Peter 2:17

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### Why can it be difficult to follow direction?

**Numbers 16:1-3;**

**Ecclesiastes 8:9;**

**Romans 5:12**

Just like us, the people Jehovah uses to direct us are imperfect.

**Luke 22:42**

Jesus set the best example of obedience. He always obeyed Jehovah.

**Proverbs 27:11;**

**Mark 12:29, 30**

Our love for Jehovah moves us to respect his arrangements. In the family, there is a family head. At school, there are teachers. In the congregation, there are elders.

## 2 THE FAMILY ARRANGEMENT IS FROM JEHOVAH

“I bend my knees to the Father, to whom every family . . . owes its name.”

—Ephesians 3:14, 15

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### Why does Jehovah want us to respect the family arrangement?

#### **Proverbs 10:1**

Jehovah designed the family to provide a secure place where children can grow and each member can enjoy loving relationships.

#### **Proverbs 1:8;**

**1 Corinthians 11:3;**

**Ephesians 6:1-3;**

#### **1 Peter 3:1**

The family benefits when each person respects his or her role.

### 3 JEHOVAH GAVE JESUS AUTHORITY OVER THE CONGREGATION

“The Christ is head of the congregation.”

—Ephesians 5:23

**Why should we cooperate with the congregation arrangement?**

**Matthew 24:45-47**

Jesus uses “the faithful and discreet slave” to care for God’s people on earth.

**1 Thessalonians 5:12;**

**Hebrews 13:17**

Elders and ministerial servants help the congregation stay strong. We show respect for Jehovah’s authority when we cooperate with these brothers.

**Acts 20:28**

Everybody benefits when we fully support the congregation. It is Jehovah’s arrangement for worship.

## 4 JEHOVAH ALLOWS GOVERNMENTS TO HAVE SOME AUTHORITY

“There is no authority except by God; the existing authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God.”—Romans 13:1

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### How can we show respect for governments?

**Matthew 5:16;**

**1 Peter 3:15**

We show respect by what we say and do. This glorifies Jehovah.

**Acts 26:2, 25;**

**Romans 12:17, 18**

Christians obey the laws of the country they are in. They remain respectful even if they are not treated well.

**Romans 13:1-4**

Bible principles can help you obey those who have authority.

**Matthew 22:37-39; 26:52;**

**John 18:36;**

**Acts 5:27-29;**

**Hebrews 10:24, 25**

If a government asks you to do something that conflicts with Jehovah’s laws, you need to decide whom you will obey.

## HOW TO KEEP SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD

“You are no part of the world.”

—JOHN 15:19.

IT WAS the night before Jesus’ death. He knew that he was about to leave his disciples, and he was concerned about their future. He told them: “You are no part of the world.” (John 15:19) Later, he prayed to his Father about them, saying: “They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.” (John 17:15, 16) What did Jesus mean?

<sup>2</sup> Here, “the world” refers to people who do not know God and are under the rule of Satan. (John 14:30; Ephesians 2:2; James 4:4; 1 John 5:19) How can we be “no part of the world”? In this chapter, we will discuss several ways: We remain loyal to God’s Kingdom and are neutral, that is, we do not take sides in politics. We resist the spirit of the world. We are modest in our dress and grooming, and we are balanced in our view of money. We also put on the suit of armor that God provides for us. —See Endnote 16.

1. What was Jesus concerned about on the night before his death?
2. What is “the world” that Jesus spoke of?

### BE LOYAL TO GOD'S KINGDOM

<sup>3</sup> When Jesus was on earth, he saw that people had many problems and that their lives were not easy. He really cared about them and wanted to help them. Did he become a political leader? No. He knew that what people really needed was God's Kingdom, or government. Jesus would be King of that Kingdom, and the Kingdom was the main theme of his preaching. (Daniel 7:13, 14; Luke 4:43; 17:20, 21) Jesus did not get involved in politics, and he always remained neutral. When Jesus was in front of Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, he said: "My Kingdom is no part of this world." (John 18:36) His disciples were also neutral. The book *On the Road to Civilization* said that the early Christians "would not hold political office." Today, true Christians feel the same. We loyally support God's Kingdom and are neutral in the political affairs of the world.—Matthew 24:14.

<sup>4</sup> Ambassadors represent their government in a foreign land, so they do not get involved in the politics of that land. The anointed, who have the hope of ruling with Christ in heaven, are in a similar situation. Paul wrote to anointed Christians: "We are ambassadors substituting for Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:20) The anointed represent God's government. They do not get involved in the political and governmental issues of this world. (Philippians

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3. How did Jesus view politics?

4. How do true Christians support God's Kingdom?

3:20) Instead, the anointed have helped millions of people to learn about God's government. The "other sheep," who have the hope of living forever in God's new world, support the anointed. They too remain neutral. (John 10:16; Matthew 25:31-40) Clearly, no true Christian would get involved in the politics of this world.—**Read Isaiah 2:2-4.**

<sup>5</sup> True Christians view all fellow believers as their family and are united no matter what country or background they are from. (1 Corinthians 1:10) If we were to go to war, we would be fighting against our own family, our fellow believers, whom Jesus commanded us to love. (John 13:34, 35; 1 John 3: \_\_\_\_\_)

5. What is one reason Christians do not fight in wars?

Are you able to explain why you loyally support God's Kingdom?





10-12) More than that, Jesus told his disciples to love even their enemies.—Matthew 5:44; 26:52.

<sup>6</sup> Even though as Christians we remain neutral, we work hard to be good citizens. For example, we show respect for the government by obeying its laws and paying our taxes. But we always make sure to give “God’s things to God.” (Mark 12:17; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20) “God’s things” include our love for him, our obedience, and our worship. We are willing to give up our life rather than disobey Jehovah.—Luke 4:8; 10:27; **read Acts 5:29; Romans 14:8.**

### RESIST “THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD”

<sup>7</sup> To be separate from Satan’s world means that we do not let “the spirit of the world” control us. That spirit is the way of thinking and behaving that comes from Satan, and it controls those who do not serve Jehovah. But Christians resist this attitude. As Paul said, “we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is from God.”—1 Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 2:2, 3; see Endnote 17.

<sup>8</sup> The spirit of the world makes people selfish, proud, and rebellious. It makes them think that they do not have to obey God. Satan wants people to do whatever they want without thinking of the consequences. He would like people to believe that “the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes”

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6. How do dedicated servants of Jehovah view governments?

7, 8. What is “the spirit of the world,” and how does it affect people?

are the most important things in life. (1 John 2: 16; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) The Devil is trying especially hard to mislead Jehovah's servants and to trick us into thinking the way he does.—John 8:44; Acts 13: 10; 1 John 3:8.

<sup>9</sup> Like the air we breathe, the spirit of the world is all around us. If we do not work hard to resist that spirit, it will affect us. (**Read Proverbs 4: 23.**) This can begin in ways that seem innocent, such as allowing ourselves to be influenced by the thinking and attitudes of people who do not worship Jehovah. (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33) Or we could be affected by such things as pornography, apostasy, or highly competitive sports.—See Endnote 18.

<sup>10</sup> How, then, can we avoid being controlled by the spirit of the world? We need to stay close to Jehovah and let his wisdom guide us. We must pray constantly for his holy spirit and stay busy in our service to him. Jehovah is the most powerful Person in the universe. We are confident that he can help us to resist the spirit of the world.—1 John 4:4.

### **DRESS IN A WAY THAT HONORS GOD**

<sup>11</sup> We also show that we are no part of the world by our dress and grooming. Many people in the

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9. How could the world's spirit affect us?

10. How can we resist the spirit of the world?

11. How has the spirit of the world influenced the way people dress?



Do I bring honor to Jehovah by the way I dress?

world dress to get attention, to stir up immoral thoughts in others, to show rebellion against society, or to show off how much money they have. Other people don't care what they look like. They may choose to be messy or dirty. We cannot allow any of these attitudes to influence our choice of dress and grooming.

<sup>12</sup> As servants of Jehovah, we always want to dress in a way that is neat, clean, in good taste,

12, 13. What principles should help us decide what we will wear?

and appropriate for the occasion. We dress with “modesty and soundness of mind,” so as to show our “devotion to God.”—1 Timothy 2:9, 10; Jude 21.

**13** The way we dress can affect how others view Jehovah and his people. We want to do “all things for God’s glory.” (1 Corinthians 10:31) Modesty involves respect for the feelings and opinions of others. So when we choose our clothes or decide how we want to look, we remember that our choices affect other people.—1 Corinthians 4:9; 2 Corinthians 6:3, 4; 7:1.

**14** How do we dress when we are at our meetings or in the field ministry? Do we draw too much attention to ourselves? Do our clothes embarrass others? Do we feel that how we dress is no one’s business but our own? (Philippians 4:5; 1 Peter 5:6) Of course, we naturally want to look good, but the things that will truly make us attractive are our Christian qualities. These are the qualities that Jehovah sees when he looks at us. They show who we are inside, “the secret person of the heart . . . , which is of great value in the eyes of God.”—1 Peter 3:3, 4.

**15** Jehovah has not given us a list of rules as to what we should or should not wear. Instead, he has provided us with Bible principles, which can help us to make good choices. (Hebrews 5:14) He wants us

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14. What should we think about when choosing our clothes for Christian activities?

15. Why doesn’t Jehovah tell us exactly how we should dress and how we should look?



to base our decisions, whether big or small, on our love for him and others. (Read Mark 12:30, 31.) All over the world, Jehovah's people dress in different ways depending on their culture and on what they personally like. This variety is beautiful and refreshing.

### **A BALANCED VIEW OF MONEY**

**16** Satan wants people to think that money and material things are what will make them happy,

16. How does the world's view of money go against what Jesus taught? What questions should we ask ourselves?

but Jehovah's servants know that this is not true. We trust Jesus' words: "Even when a person has an abundance, his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) Money cannot make us truly happy. It cannot give us true friends, real peace of mind, or everlasting life. Of course, we need some material things, and we want to enjoy our life. But Jesus taught us that we will be happy if we have a good relationship with God and if our worship is the most important thing in our life. (Matthew 5:3; 6:22, footnote) Ask yourself: 'Has the world's view of money affected me? Is money the main thing I think or talk about?'—Luke 6:45; 21:34-36; 2 John 6.

**17** If we focus on serving Jehovah and reject the world's view of money, our life will be meaningful. (Matthew 11:29, 30) We will be content and have peace in our mind and heart. (Matthew 6:31, 32; Romans 15:13) We will be less anxious about material things. (**Read 1 Timothy 6:9, 10.**) We will enjoy the happiness of giving. (Acts 20:35) And our way of life will give us more time with those we love. We may even sleep better.—Ecclesiastes 5:12.

### **"THE COMPLETE SUIT OF ARMOR"**

**18** Satan is trying to destroy our relationship with Jehovah, so we must do everything we can to protect it. We have a fight "against the wicked spirit

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17. How can your life improve if you reject the world's view of money?

18. What is Satan trying to do to us?

forces.” (Ephesians 6:12) Satan and his demons do not want us to be happy or to live forever. (1 Peter 5:8) These powerful enemies are fighting against us, but with Jehovah’s help we can win the fight!

**19** In ancient times, soldiers wore armor to protect themselves on the battlefield. In a similar way, we must wear the “suit of armor” that Jehovah has given us. (Ephesians 6:13) It will protect us. We read about this armor at Ephesians 6:14-18: “Stand firm, therefore, with the belt of truth fastened around your waist, wearing the breastplate of righteousness, and having your feet shod in readiness to declare the good news of peace. Besides all of this, take up the large shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the wicked one’s burning arrows. Also, accept the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, that is, God’s word, while with every form of prayer and supplication you carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit.”

**20** If a soldier forgets a piece of his armor and leaves a part of his body unprotected, that is where his enemy will attack him. If we want our “armor” to protect us, we cannot forget a single piece. We need to wear it all the time and keep it in good condition. Our fight will continue until Satan’s world is destroyed and Satan and his demons are removed from the earth. (Revelation 12:17; 20:1-3) So if we

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19. How does Ephesians 6:14-18 describe a Christian’s “suit of armor”?

20. What must we do in order for the “suit of armor” to help us?

are fighting wrong desires or struggling with some weakness, we should not give up!—1 Corinthians 9:27.

**21** On our own, we are not stronger than the Devil. But with Jehovah's help, we are! To remain faithful, we need to pray to Jehovah, study his Word, and associate with our brothers and sisters. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) These things will help us to remain loyal to God and to be ready to defend our faith.

### **BE READY TO DEFEND YOUR FAITH**

**22** We need to be ready to defend our faith at all times. (John 15:19) On certain issues, Jehovah's Witnesses take a very different stand from that of most people. Ask yourself: 'Do I really understand why we take this stand? Am I convinced that what the Bible and the faithful and discreet slave say is right? Am I proud to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses? (Psalm 34:2; Matthew 10:32, 33) Can I explain my beliefs to others?'—Matthew 24:45; John 17:17; **read 1 Peter 3:15.**

**23** In many situations, it is very clear what we must do to remain separate from the world. But at other times, it is not so obvious. Satan tries to trap us in various ways. One trap he uses is entertainment. How can we choose our entertainment wisely? We will see in the next chapter.

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21. How can we win our fight?

22, 23. (a) How can we always be ready to defend our faith?

(b) What will we discuss in the next chapter?



## **1** CHRISTIANS ARE LOYAL TO GOD'S KINGDOM

“My Kingdom is no part of this world.”

—John 18:36

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**How do we show that we are neutral and that we support God's Kingdom?**

**Isaiah 2:2-4;**

**John 6:15;**

**1 Peter 3:15**

We do not fight in wars or get involved in politics.

**Exodus 20:4, 5;**

**1 John 5:21**

We do not worship any national symbols. For example, we do not salute the flag.

**Matthew 26:52**

Violence only causes more violence. We wait on Jehovah to solve the problems of this world permanently.

**John 13:34, 35;**

**1 John 3:10-12**

All fellow believers, no matter their country, tribe, or background, are our brothers and sisters. We would never fight against one another.

## 2 CHRISTIANS ARE “NO PART OF THE WORLD”

“They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.”—John 17:16

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**Why do we need to stay separate from Satan’s world?**

### **1 John 5:19**

“The world” refers to people who do not know God and who are influenced by the ruler of the world, Satan.

### **James 4:4**

We want Jehovah to view us as his friends. We imitate Jehovah and Jesus in our attitude, speech, and actions.

### 3 CHRISTIANS AVOID THE ATTITUDES OF THE WORLD

“Above all the things that you guard,  
safeguard your heart.”—Proverbs 4:23

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#### What does it mean to resist the attitudes of Satan’s world?

**Ephesians 2:2;**  
**1 John 2:16**

Satan is selfish, proud, and rebellious. He wants people to believe that they do not have to obey God.

**1 Corinthians 10:31**

We show that we are no part of the world by what we say and do. We show this even in personal matters.

**1 Corinthians 2:12;**  
**1 John 4:4**

To resist the attitudes of Satan’s world, we need to stay close to Jehovah and fill our mind with his thoughts.

## 4 MONEY DOES NOT GIVE US LASTING SECURITY OR TRUE PEACE OF MIND

“Even when a person has an abundance, his life does not result from the things he possesses.”—Luke 12:15

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### What will help us to have Jehovah’s view of material things?

**Acts 20:35;**

**1 Timothy 6:9, 10**

Satan wants us to believe that pleasures and riches will make us happy. But Jesus taught us that happiness comes from having a good relationship with God and from giving to others.

**Matthew 6:31, 32;**

**Mark 12:30, 31;**

**Luke 21:34-36**

When we focus on serving Jehovah, our life will be meaningful. We can be content and have inner peace.

## HOW TO CHOOSE OUR ENTERTAINMENT

“Do all things for God’s glory.”

—1 CORINTHIANS 10:31.

IMAGINE that you are about to bite into a piece of fruit when you notice that a part of it is rotten. What will you do? Will you eat it anyway? Will you throw it away? Or will you cut out the rotten part and eat the good part?

<sup>2</sup> In some ways, entertainment is similar to that piece of fruit. Some of it may be enjoyable, but much of it is rotten because it is immoral, violent,

1, 2. Why must we be careful when we choose entertainment?



or demonic. So when you choose entertainment, do you say: "It's up to me. I can choose any entertainment I want"? Or do you say: "All entertainment is bad"? Or do you carefully choose your entertainment, avoiding the bad and enjoying the good?

<sup>3</sup> We all need some recreation and entertainment, and we want to choose well. We need to ask ourselves, then, how our choice of entertainment could affect our worship of Jehovah.

### **"DO ALL THINGS FOR GOD'S GLORY"**

<sup>4</sup> When we dedicate ourselves to Jehovah, we promise him that we will use our life to serve him. (Read Ecclesiastes 5:4.) We promise that we will "do all things for God's glory." (1 Corinthians 10:31) This means that we are dedicated to God even when we are relaxing or enjoying entertainment, not just when we are at meetings or in the field ministry.

<sup>5</sup> Everything we do in life is connected to our worship of Jehovah. Paul explained this when he said: "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God." (Romans 12:1) Jesus said: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength." (Mark

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3. What should we think about when choosing our entertainment?
  4. What is one Bible principle that can help us to choose our entertainment?
  5. What kind of worship should we give Jehovah?

12:30) We always want to give Jehovah our best. In ancient Israel, when people sacrificed an animal to Jehovah, they were expected to give a healthy animal. If the sacrifice had something wrong with it, God did not accept it. (Leviticus 22:18-20) In a similar way, our worship could become unacceptable to Jehovah. How?

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah tells us: “You must be holy, because I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:14-16; 2 Peter 3:11) Jehovah will accept our worship only if it is holy, or clean. (Deuteronomy 15:21) Our worship cannot be clean if we do things Jehovah hates, such as things that are immoral, violent, or connected with demonism. (Romans 6:12-14; 8:13) But it would also displease Jehovah if we allowed ourselves to be entertained by such things. This could make our worship unclean and unacceptable to Jehovah and could seriously damage our relationship with him.

<sup>7</sup> So how can we choose our entertainment wisely? What principles will help us identify what entertainment is acceptable and what is not?

### HATE WHAT IS BAD

<sup>8</sup> There are many different types of entertainment available today. Some of it is acceptable for Christians, but much of it is not acceptable. First, let's identify what kind of entertainment we need to avoid.

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6, 7. How could our entertainment affect our worship of Jehovah?  
8, 9. What kind of entertainment do we avoid? Why?

<sup>9</sup> Many films, websites, television shows, video games, and songs are immoral, violent, or demonic. Bad things are often presented in a way that seems innocent and even funny. But Christians are careful to reject entertainment that does not reflect Jehovah's clean standards. (Acts 15:28, 29; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) When we reject such entertainment, we show Jehovah that we hate what is bad.—Psalm 34:14; Romans 12:9.

<sup>10</sup> But some feel that there's nothing wrong with violent, immoral, or demonic entertainment. They think: 'What is the harm? I would never actually do these things.' If we think this way, we are fooling ourselves. The Bible says: "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate." (Jeremiah 17:9) If we are entertained by things that are unacceptable to Jehovah, how can we say that we hate these things? The more we are entertained by them, the more we will begin to accept them as normal. In time, our conscience will weaken and stop warning us when we are about to make a wrong choice.—Psalm 119:70; 1 Timothy 4:1, 2.

<sup>11</sup> God's Word tells us: "Whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7) It is a fact that if we let ourselves be entertained by bad things, in time we may actually do them. For

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10. What can be the result of bad choices of entertainment?

11. How can Galatians 6:7 help us choose our entertainment?



example, some have been so affected by immoral entertainment that they committed immorality themselves. But Jehovah gives us the help we need to choose our entertainment wisely.

### USE BIBLE PRINCIPLES TO MAKE DECISIONS

<sup>12</sup> Some entertainment is clearly unacceptable to Jehovah, and we know we must avoid it. But what if it is not so clear? Jehovah doesn't give us a list of rules of what we can and cannot watch, listen to, or read. Instead, he wants us to use our Bible-trained conscience. (**Read Galatians 6:5.**) Jehovah gives us principles, that is, basic truths that teach us how he views matters. These principles help train our conscience. They help us know "what the will of Jehovah is" so that we can make choices that will please him.—Ephesians 5:17.

<sup>13</sup> Often, what one Christian chooses as entertainment is different from what another does. Why? Well, we all like different things. Also, what may be acceptable to one person might not be acceptable to someone else. Even so, to make good decisions, all Christians must be guided by Bible principles. (Philippians 1:9) These will help us to choose entertainment that is acceptable to God.—Psalm 119:11, 129; 1 Peter 2:16.

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12. What will help us make good decisions regarding our entertainment?

13. Why do Christians make different decisions about entertainment? But what matters to all Christians?



### Bible principles help us to choose our entertainment

**14** Another thing to consider is how much time we spend on entertainment. This can reveal how important entertainment is to us. As Christians, our service to Jehovah is the most important thing in our lives. (Read **Matthew 6:33**.) But without realizing it, we could allow entertainment to take up more and more of our time. Paul advised Christians: “Watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, making the best use of your time.” (Ephesians 5:15, 16) So we need to set limits on the amount of time we spend on entertainment

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14. (a) What is important to consider regarding how we use time?  
(b) What counsel did Paul give to Christians?

Before choosing entertainment,  
Christians ask themselves:

- How will it affect my relationship with God?
- How will it affect me personally?
- How will it affect others?



and always make sure that our service to God has first place in our lives.—Philippians 1:10.

<sup>15</sup> Clearly, we must reject entertainment that we know is unacceptable to Jehovah. But what about entertainment that we may have doubts about? Do we still need to be careful? Think about this. If you are walking along a mountain path, do you go as close as you can to the edge? No. If you value your life, you stay far away from danger. It is similar with our choice of entertainment. God's Word tells us: "Turn your feet away from what is bad." (Proverbs 4:25-27) So we not only avoid entertainment that we **know** is bad, but we also stay away from any entertainment that we **suspect** might not be good for us and might harm our relationship with Jehovah.

### GETTING JEHOVAH'S VIEW

<sup>16</sup> The psalmist wrote: "O you who love Jehovah, hate what is bad." (Psalm 97:10) The Bible teaches us how Jehovah thinks and feels. Ask yourself how what you learn can help you to view things as Jehovah does. For example, we learn that Jehovah hates "a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart plotting wicked schemes, and feet that run quickly to evil." (Proverbs 6:16-19) We learn that we must avoid "sexual immorality, . . . idolatry, spiritism, . . . jealousy, fits of anger,

15. How do we protect ourselves from entertainment that could harm our relationship with Jehovah?

16. (a) What are some things that Jehovah hates? (b) How do we show that we hate what Jehovah hates?

... envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and things like these.” (Galatians 5:19-21) Do you see how these Bible principles can help you to choose your entertainment? We want to follow Jehovah’s standards in all areas of our life, both when we are with others and when we are by ourselves. (2 Corinthians 3:18) In fact, the choices we make when we are alone often reveal the kind of person we really are.—Psalm 11:4; 16:8.

**17** Thus, when you choose entertainment, ask yourself: ‘How will my choice affect my relationship with Jehovah? How will it affect my conscience?’ Let’s examine some other principles that can help us when choosing entertainment.

**18** When we choose our entertainment, we are choosing what to fill our mind with. Paul wrote: “Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well-spoken-of, whatever things are virtuous, and whatever things are praiseworthy, continue considering these things.” (Philippians 4:8) When we fill our mind with such good things, we can say: “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Jehovah.”—Psalm 19:14.

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17. Before choosing entertainment, what questions should we ask ourselves?

18, 19. (a) What advice did Paul give to Christians? (b) What principles will help us to choose our entertainment?

**19** Ask yourself: ‘What am I filling my mind with? After watching a particular movie or show, do I have pleasant, refreshing thoughts? Do I feel at peace, having a good conscience? (Ephesians 5:5; 1 Timothy 1:5, 19) Do I feel free to pray to Jehovah? Or do I feel bad? Did the entertainment make me think about violent or immoral things? (Matthew 12:33; Mark 7:20-23) By the entertainment I choose, am I being “molded by this system of things?” (Romans 12:2) Our honest answers can help us see what we need to do to keep our relationship with Jehovah strong. We want to pray as the psalmist did: “Turn my eyes away from looking at what is worthless.”\*—Psalm 119:37.

### OUR DECISIONS AFFECT OTHERS

**20** Another important principle to keep in mind is this: “All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person.” (1 Corinthians 10:23, 24) Just because we have the freedom to do something does not mean that we should do it. We must think carefully about how our decisions affect our brothers and sisters.

**21** Not everyone’s conscience is the same. For example, your conscience may allow you to watch

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\* We can find more principles that can help us choose entertainment at Proverbs 3:31; 13:20; Ephesians 5:3, 4; and Colossians 3:5, 8, 20.

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20, 21. Why do we need to consider the feelings of others when we choose our entertainment?

a certain television program. But then you learn that the same program bothers the conscience of your brother or sister. What will you do? Even though you have the right to watch it, you may decide not to. Why? Because you don't want to "sin against your brothers"—or even be "sinning against Christ." (1 Corinthians 8:12) We do not want to do anything that will stumble our fellow Christian.—Romans 14:1; 15:1; 1 Corinthians 10:32.

**22** On the other hand, what if your conscience does not allow you to watch, read, or do something that someone else feels is acceptable? Because you love and respect your brother, you would not put pressure on him to make the same choices as you. A person driving a vehicle knows that others may drive faster or slower than he does and still be good drivers. In a similar way, you and another brother may both be following Bible principles yet have slightly different opinions as to what entertainment is acceptable.—Ecclesiastes 7:16; Philippians 4:5.

**23** So, what will help us to choose our entertainment well? When we use our conscience that has been trained by Bible principles and we really care about our brothers and sisters, we will choose well. And we will feel happy that we are doing "all things for God's glory."

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22. How will we show that we are reasonable when it comes to the choices made by other Christians?

23. What will help us choose our entertainment well?

# 1 OUR CHOICE OF ENTERTAINMENT SHOWS JEHOVAH HOW MUCH WE LOVE HIM

“Do all things for God’s glory.”

—1 Corinthians 10:31

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**Why do we need to be careful when choosing entertainment?**

**Psalm 11:5, 7; 34:14;**

**Romans 12:9;**

**1 Corinthians 6:9, 10**

Much of today’s entertainment—whether in films, on websites, on television shows, in video games, in music, or in other forms—is immoral, violent, or demonic.

**Mark 12:30;**

**Romans 12:1, 2**

Our entertainment can either refresh us or make it more difficult for us to remain faithful to Jehovah.

**Jeremiah 17:9;**

**Galatians 6:7**

We are influenced by our entertainment.



## 2 BIBLE PRINCIPLES CAN HELP US TO CHOOSE OUR ENTERTAINMENT

“Keep perceiving what the will of Jehovah is.”—Ephesians 5:17

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**What Bible principles can help us make good decisions about our entertainment?**

**Psalm 16:8;**

**Proverbs 6:16-19;**

**Galatians 5:19-21**

We should hate the things that Jehovah hates, such as violence, demonism, and immorality.

**Psalm 19:14;**

**Philippians 4:8**

When we fill our mind with good things and meditate on them, we please Jehovah.

**Matthew 6:33;**

**Ephesians 5:15, 16**

We should be careful about how much time we spend on entertainment. Our worship of Jehovah needs to be the most important thing in our lives.

### 3 OUR CHOICES AFFECT OTHERS

“Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person.”

—1 Corinthians 10:24

#### Why should we care about how others feel about our choice of entertainment?

**Ecclesiastes 7:16;**

**Romans 2:21**

What one Christian chooses as entertainment may differ from another’s choice. Rather than judging others for the choices they make, we try to make good choices ourselves.

**Galatians 6:5;**

**Philippians 4:5**

Our choices are affected by our conscience, and not everyone’s conscience is the same as ours.

**1 Corinthians 10:32;**

**Philippians 1:10**

We do not want to stumble our brothers or sisters, so we are careful about the entertainment we choose.

## DO YOU VALUE LIFE AS GOD DOES?

“With you is the source of life.”

—PSALM 36:9.

JEHOVAH has given every one of us a wonderful gift. It is the gift of life. (Genesis 1:27) He wants us to have the best life possible. So he has provided principles that teach us how we can make good decisions. We should use these principles to help us to “distinguish” between “right and wrong.” (Hebrews 5:14) When we do so, we are allowing Jehovah to train us to think clearly. As we live by God’s principles and see how they make our life better, we come to understand just how precious they truly are.

<sup>2</sup> Life can be very complicated. Situations often come up that are not covered by a direct law in the Bible. For example, we may need to make decisions about medical treatments that involve the use of blood. How can we make decisions that will please Jehovah? The Bible contains principles that teach us how Jehovah views life and blood. If we understand these principles, we will be able to make wise decisions and keep a good conscience.

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1, 2. What precious gift did Jehovah give us?

(Proverbs 2:6-11) Now, let's examine some of those principles.

### HOW DOES GOD VIEW LIFE AND BLOOD?

<sup>3</sup> The Bible teaches us that blood is sacred because it represents life. And life is precious to Jehovah. After Cain murdered his brother, Jehovah told him: "Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground." (Genesis 4:10) Abel's blood represented his life; when Cain killed Abel, he took his life away.

<sup>4</sup> After the Flood of Noah's day, God told humans that they could eat meat. But he specifically said: "Flesh with its life—its blood—you must not eat." (Genesis 9:4) This command applies to all of Noah's descendants, including us. Plainly, to Jehovah, blood represents life. And we need to view blood the same way.—Psalm 36:9.

<sup>5</sup> In the Law Jehovah gave to Moses, He stated: "If any man . . . eats any sort of blood, I will certainly set my face against the one who is eating the blood, and I will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood."—Leviticus 17:10, 11.

<sup>6</sup> The Law of Moses said that when someone killed an animal for food, he had to pour its blood onto the ground. This showed that the animal's

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3, 4. (a) How did God reveal his view of blood? (b) What does blood represent?

5, 6. How did the Law of Moses show how Jehovah views life and blood?

life was given back to its Creator, Jehovah. (Deuteronomy 12:16; Ezekiel 18:4) But Jehovah did not expect the Israelites to go to extremes when they bled an animal. As long as they did all they reasonably could to remove the blood, they could eat the meat with a clean conscience. By showing respect for the animal's blood, they showed that they respected the Giver of life, Jehovah. The Law also commanded the Israelites to offer animals as sacrifices to cover sins.—See Endnotes 19 and 20.

<sup>7</sup> We can see the value of blood from something that David did when he was fighting the Philistines. David's men saw that he was very thirsty, so they went into dangerous enemy territory and risked their lives to get him water. But when they brought it to David, he refused to drink it and "poured it out to Jehovah." David said: "It is unthinkable on my part, O Jehovah, that I should do this! Should I drink the blood of the men going at the risk of their lives?" David understood how precious life and blood are to God.—2 Samuel 23:15-17.

<sup>8</sup> By the time of the early Christians, God's people no longer had to offer animal sacrifices. But they still needed to have the correct view of blood. "Abstaining from . . . blood" was one of the few parts of the Law that Jehovah required Christians to keep. This was as important as avoiding immorality or idolatry.—Acts 15:28, 29.

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7. How did David show respect for blood?

8, 9. How should Christians today view blood?

<sup>9</sup> It is similar today. As Christians, we know that Jehovah is the Source of life and that all life belongs to him. We also realize that blood is sacred and represents life. So we make sure to consider Bible principles when we make any decisions about medical treatment involving the use of blood.

### THE MEDICAL USE OF BLOOD

<sup>10</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses understand that "abstaining from . . . blood" involves more than not eating or drinking it. It means not accepting blood transfusions, not donating blood, and not storing our own blood for transfusion. It also means not accepting transfusions of any of the four main parts of blood—red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma.

<sup>11</sup> These four main parts of blood may be broken down into smaller parts called blood fractions. Each Christian must decide whether or not he will accept blood fractions. The same applies to medical procedures that make use of a patient's own blood. Each one must decide how his own blood will be handled *in the course of a surgical procedure, medical test, or current therapy*.—See Endnote 21.

<sup>12</sup> Does Jehovah really care about our decisions in matters of conscience? Yes, he does. Jehovah is

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10, 11. (a) How do Jehovah's Witnesses view the transfusion of either whole blood or the four main parts of blood? (b) What personal decisions does each Christian need to make?

12. (a) Why are our decisions in matters of conscience important to Jehovah? (b) How can we make wise decisions regarding medical procedures?

How would I explain my decision about the use of blood fractions?



interested in our thoughts and motives. (**Read Proverbs 17:3; 24:12.**) Since that is the case, when we are making a decision involving medical treatment, we need to pray for Jehovah's guidance and then research the treatment. After that, we use our Bible-trained conscience to make our decision. We should not ask others what they would do if they were in our situation, nor should others try to influence our decision. Each Christian will "carry his own load."—Galatians 6:5; Romans 14:12.

### JEHOVAH'S LAWS REVEAL HIS LOVE FOR US

<sup>13</sup> Anything Jehovah asks us to do is for our own good and shows his love for us. (Psalm 19:7-11) But we do not obey him just because his commands benefit us. We obey him because we love him. Our love for Jehovah moves us to avoid blood transfusions. (Acts 15:20) This also protects our health. Most people today know about some of the risks of blood transfusions, and many doctors believe that operating without blood is better for their patients' health. It is clear that Jehovah's ways are wise and loving.—**Read Isaiah 55:9; John 14:21, 23.**

<sup>14</sup> God's laws have always been for the good of his people. Jehovah gave the ancient Israelites laws to protect them from serious accidents. For example,

13. What do we learn about Jehovah from his laws and principles about blood?

14, 15. (a) What laws did Jehovah give his people to protect them?  
(b) How can you apply the principles behind those laws?



one law said that a homeowner should build a low wall around his flat roof so that no one would fall off. (Deuteronomy 22:8) Another law had to do with animals. If someone owned a violent bull, he was responsible for keeping it under control so that it would not attack or kill anyone. (Exodus 21:28, 29) If an Israelite did not obey these laws, it was his fault if someone died as a result.

<sup>15</sup> From these laws we can see that life is precious to Jehovah. How should knowing this affect us? We should show that we respect life by the way we care for our home and vehicle, the way we drive, and the way we choose our recreation. Some people, especially young people, feel that nothing bad can happen to them, so they take risks and ignore potential dangers. But that is not how Jehovah wants us to behave. He wants us to treat all life as important—both our own life and the lives of others.—Ecclesiastes 11:9, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Every human life is important to Jehovah. Even an unborn baby is precious to him. Under the Law of Moses, if a person accidentally hurt a pregnant woman and either she or her baby died, Jehovah held that person guilty of manslaughter. This meant that even though it was an accident, someone had been killed and the life had to be compensated for. (**Read Exodus 21:22, 23.**) To God, an unborn baby is a living person. Knowing that, how

do you think he feels about abortion? How do you think he feels when he sees millions of unborn babies killed every year?

**17** What if a woman had an abortion before she learned how Jehovah views it? She can be sure that Jehovah can forgive her on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice. (Luke 5:32; Ephesians 1:7) A woman who made such a mistake in the past does not need to keep feeling guilty if she is sincerely sorry. "Jehovah is merciful and compassionate . . . As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us he has put our transgressions."—Psalm 103:8-14.

### AVOID HATEFUL THOUGHTS

**18** Respect for God's gift of life begins deep in our heart. It involves how we feel about others. "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer," wrote the apostle John. (1 John 3:15) Before we realize it, dislike of another person can grow into hatred. Hatred can cause someone to disrespect others, make false accusations about them, or even wish that they were dead. Jehovah knows how we feel about other people. (Leviticus 19:16; Deuteronomy 19:18-21; Matthew 5:22) If we find that we have hateful thoughts about someone, we need to work hard to get rid of these thoughts.—James 1:14, 15; 4:1-3.

**19** There's another way we can show that we value

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17. What can comfort a woman who had an abortion before knowing Jehovah?

18. Why should we do all we can to get rid of hateful thoughts?

19. How should Jehovah's view of violence affect us?

life. At Psalm 11:5, we learn that Jehovah “hates anyone who loves violence.” If we choose violent entertainment, we might be showing that we love violence. Why would we want to put violent words, ideas, and pictures into our mind? Instead, we want to fill our mind with clean and peaceful thoughts.—**Read Philipians 4:8, 9.**

### **BE NO PART OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT DO NOT RESPECT LIFE**

<sup>20</sup> Satan’s world does not respect life, and Jehovah views it as bloodguilty, that is, guilty of murder. Over the centuries, political powers have caused millions of people to die, including many of Jehovah’s servants. In the Bible, these powers, or governments, are described as fierce and violent beasts. (Daniel 8:3, 4, 20-22; Revelation 13:1, 2, 7, 8) In today’s world, the sale of weapons is big business. People make huge profits selling such deadly weapons. Clearly, “the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.”—1 John 5:19.

<sup>21</sup> But true Christians are “no part of the world.” Jehovah’s people are neutral in politics and in war. Just as they do not kill, they do not support any organization that kills people. (John 15:19; 17:16) When Christians are persecuted, they do not respond with violence. Jesus taught that we should love even our enemies.—Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:17-21.

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20-22. (a) How does Jehovah view Satan’s world? (b) How can God’s people show that they are “no part of the world”?

**22** Religion too has been behind the deaths of millions of people. When speaking of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, the Bible says: "In her was found the blood of prophets and of holy ones and of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth." Can you understand why Jehovah commands us: "Get out of her, my people"? Those who worship Jehovah are no part of false religion.—Revelation 17:6; 18:2, 4, 24.

**23** To "get out of" Babylon the Great involves making it very clear that we are no longer part of any false religion. For example, we may need to make sure that our name has been removed from a religion's membership list. But more is involved. We also need to hate and reject the bad things false religion does. False religion allows and promotes immorality, politics, and greed. (Read Psalm 97:10; Revelation 18:7, 9, 11-17) Over the years, millions of lives have been lost as a result.

**24** Before coming to know Jehovah, each of us in some way supported the bad things that Satan's world does. But now we have changed. We have accepted the ransom and dedicated our lives to God. We experience "seasons of refreshing . . . from Jehovah himself." We have peace and a good conscience, knowing that we are pleasing God.—Acts 3:19; Isaiah 1:18.

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23. What is involved in 'getting out of' Babylon the Great?

24, 25. How can knowing Jehovah bring us peace and a good conscience?

**25** Even if we were once part of an organization that does not respect life, Jehovah can forgive us on the basis of the ransom. We truly appreciate Jehovah's gift of life. We show our appreciation by doing all we can to help others to learn about Jehovah, leave Satan's world, and enjoy a close friendship with God.—2 Corinthians 6:1, 2.

### TELL OTHERS ABOUT THE KINGDOM

**26** In ancient Israel, Jehovah told the prophet Ezekiel to warn people that Jerusalem would soon be destroyed and to teach them what they needed to do to survive. If Ezekiel did not warn the people, Jehovah would hold him responsible for their lives. (Ezekiel 33:7-9) Ezekiel showed that he valued life by doing all he could to share that important message.

**27** Jehovah has given us the assignment to warn people that Satan's world will soon be destroyed and to help them come to know Jehovah and survive into the new world. (Isaiah 61:2; Matthew 24:14) We want to do all we can to share that message with others. We hope to say as Paul did: "I am clean from the blood of all men, for I have not held back from telling you all the counsel of God."—Acts 20:26, 27.

**28** There are other areas in life where we need to be clean. Let's examine some of these in the next chapter.

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26-28. (a) What special work did Jehovah give Ezekiel? (b) What does Jehovah ask us to do today?

## 1 LIFE IS PRECIOUS TO JEHOVAH

“With you is the source of life.”—Psalm 36:9

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### Why should we view life as a precious gift?

**Genesis 1:27;**

**Psalm 19:7-11;**

**Proverbs 2:6-11**

Jehovah created all living things, including humans.

We are precious to him, and he wants each person to have a happy and meaningful life.

**Romans 14:12;**

**Galatians 6:5**

Jehovah didn't create us to be like robots. He gave us free will and the ability to make decisions that show how much we value life.

## 2 BLOOD IS SACRED TO JEHOVAH

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood.”

—Leviticus 17:11

### How does Jehovah view blood?

**Leviticus 17:10;**

**Proverbs 13:16;**

**Acts 15:20;**

**Romans 12:2**

A situation may arise that requires us to make serious decisions about certain medical treatments involving blood, including whether or not we will accept blood fractions. Others should not make these decisions for us. Before such a situation arises, we should pray for guidance and do necessary research.

**Genesis 9:4, 5, 9;**

**Deuteronomy 12:16;**

**Acts 15:28, 29**

In the Bible, blood represents life. God’s law on blood has never changed. It has stayed the same from the time of Noah to the time God gave Israel the Mosaic Law and down to Christian times.

### 3 WE NEED TO VIEW LIFE AS JEHOVAH DOES

“My ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”—Isaiah 55:9

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**What are some ways that we show that we view life as precious?**

**Exodus 21:22, 23**

Every human life is important to Jehovah. Abortion is wrong because to God, even an unborn baby is a living person.

**Psalm 103:8-14;**

**Acts 3:19;**

**Ephesians 1:7**

If a woman had an abortion in the past but is now repentant, Jehovah will forgive her.

**Psalm 11:5;**

**Ecclesiastes 11:9, 10**

We show we respect life by avoiding dangerous sports and risky or violent behavior. We are also careful to keep our home and vehicle safe.



## 4 SATAN'S WORLD IS BLOODGUILTY IN JEHOVAH'S EYES

“I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the holy ones.”—Revelation 17:6

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### Why is Satan's world bloodguilty?

**Revelation 18:2, 4, 9, 24**  
Millions have been killed in the name of religion, politics, and greed.

**Matthew 24:14;**  
**John 17:16;**  
**Acts 20:26, 27**  
Christians remain neutral and do not support any organization that is connected to war or murder. We help people gain life by sharing the Kingdom message with them.

## JEHOVAH WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO BE CLEAN

“With the pure you show yourself pure.”

—PSALM 18:26.

IMAGINE a loving mother getting her little boy ready for school. She makes sure that he has bathed and that his clothes are neat and clean. This keeps him healthy and shows others that his parents are looking after him.

<sup>2</sup> Our Father, Jehovah, wants us to be clean and pure. (Psalm 18:26) He knows that being clean ben-

- 1-3. (a) Why does a mother make sure that her young son is clean?  
(b) Why does Jehovah want his people to be clean?



efits us. And when we are clean, we bring honor to him.—Ezekiel 36:22; read 1 Peter 2:12.

<sup>3</sup> What does it mean to be clean? And why is being clean good for us? As we examine these questions, we may see some changes we personally need to make.

### WHY DO WE NEED TO BE CLEAN?

<sup>4</sup> We learn to be clean and pure from Jehovah's own example. (Leviticus 11:44, 45) So the main reason we need to be clean is that we want to be "imitators of God."—Ephesians 5:1.

<sup>5</sup> Creation teaches us much about how Jehovah views cleanness. Jehovah created natural cycles that keep our air and water clean. (Jeremiah 10:12) Think of the many ways that the earth cleans itself, even after humans have polluted it. For example, Jehovah designed tiny living things called microbes, which can only be seen with a microscope. Microbes can change poisonous waste into harmless material. This is a powerful process. Scientists even use some of these microbes to reverse the effects of pollution.—Romans 1:20.

<sup>6</sup> We also see how important being clean is from the Law that Jehovah gave the Israelites through Moses. For example, the people had to be physically clean for Jehovah to accept their worship. On

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4, 5. (a) Why do we need to be clean? (b) What does creation teach us about how Jehovah views cleanness?

6, 7. How did the Law of Moses show that those who worship Jehovah must be clean?

the Day of Atonement, the high priest had to bathe twice. (Leviticus 16:4, 23, 24) And before the other priests could offer sacrifices, they had to wash their hands and feet. (Exodus 30:17-21; 2 Chronicles 4:6) In some situations, the penalty for disobeying laws on cleanness was death.—Leviticus 15:31; Numbers 19:17-20.

<sup>7</sup> What about today? We can learn much about Jehovah's standards from the Law. (Malachi 3:6) It clearly showed that Jehovah's worshippers needed to be clean. Jehovah's standards have not changed. Today, he still expects his worshippers to be clean and pure.—James 1:27.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CLEAN?

<sup>8</sup> From Jehovah's point of view, being clean means more than just keeping our body, clothes, and home clean. Cleanness involves our whole life. It includes our worship, conduct, and thoughts. Yes, for Jehovah to view us as clean, we must be clean and pure in every aspect of our lives.

<sup>9</sup> **Pure worship.** We cannot be involved with false religion in any way. When the Israelites were prisoners in Babylon, they were surrounded by people who were involved in immoral pagan religion. Isaiah prophesied that the Israelites would return home to Israel and reestablish pure worship. Jehovah told them: "Get out of there, touch nothing unclean! Get out from the midst of her, keep your—

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8. In what ways must we be clean?

9, 10. What does it mean to be clean in our worship?

selves clean.” Their worship of God could not be mixed with the teachings, habits, or customs of the false religion of Babylon.—Isaiah 52:11.

**<sup>10</sup> True Christians today also avoid false religion. (Read 1 Corinthians 10:21.)** All over the world, many popular traditions, customs, and beliefs are based on false religious teachings. For example, in many cultures, people believe that there is something inside of us that keeps living after we die, and there are many customs based on this belief. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10) Christians need to avoid such customs. Our family members may pressure us to share in some of these. But because we want Jehovah to view us as clean, we do not give in to such pressure.—Acts 5:29.

**<sup>11</sup> Pure conduct.** To be viewed as pure by Jehovah, we must avoid sexual immorality of any kind. (Read Ephesians 5:5.) In the Bible, Jehovah tells us to “flee from sexual immorality.” He makes it clear that those who are immoral and do not repent “will not inherit God’s Kingdom.”—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, 18; see Endnote 22.

**<sup>12</sup> Pure thoughts.** Thoughts often lead to actions. (Matthew 5:28; 15:18, 19) Pure thoughts will move us to act in a pure way. Of course, we are imperfect, so we will have wrong thoughts from time to time. When we do, we should reject them right away. If we do not, in time we may find that our heart is

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11. What does it mean to be clean in our conduct?

12, 13. Why do we need to be clean in our thoughts?

no longer pure. We may begin wanting to do the things we keep thinking about. Instead, we must fill our mind with pure thoughts. (**Read Philippians 4:8.**) So we avoid such things as immoral or violent entertainment. We carefully choose what we read, watch, and talk about.—Psalm 19:8, 9.

**13** To remain in God's love, we must be pure in our worship, conduct, and thoughts. But it is also important to Jehovah that we be physically clean.

### HOW CAN WE BE PHYSICALLY CLEAN?

**14** When we keep our body and surroundings clean, we will benefit both ourselves and the people around us. We will feel good, and others will like to be with us. But there is a more important reason to be physically clean. Our being clean brings honor to Jehovah. Think about this: If you see a child who is always dirty, you may think badly of his parents. In a similar way, if we do not take good care of ourselves and keep ourselves clean, people may think badly of Jehovah. Paul said: "In no way are we giving any cause for stumbling, so that no fault may be found with our ministry; but in every way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers."—2 Corinthians 6:3, 4.

**15 Our body and clothing.** Keeping ourselves clean needs to be part of our daily routine. For example, we bathe regularly, every day if possible. We

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14. Why is it important to be physically clean?

15, 16. What can we do to keep ourselves clean?



As Jehovah's people, we need to keep ourselves and our surroundings clean

wash our hands with soap and water, especially before cooking or eating and definitely after using the toilet or touching something dirty. Washing our hands seems like a simple thing, but it is necessary in order to stop bacteria and disease from spreading. It can even save lives. If we do not have a toilet or a sewage system, we can still find effective ways to dispose of waste. The ancient Israelites did not have a sewage system, so they buried their waste in the ground, far from people's homes and water sources.—Deuteronomy 23:12, 13.

**16** Our clothes do not need to be fancy, expensive, or the latest fashion. But they should be neat and clean. (Read 1 Timothy 2:9, 10.) We always want

our appearance to bring honor to Jehovah.—Titus 2:10.

**17 Our home and surroundings.** No matter where we live, we keep our homes clean. We also make sure that our car, scooter, bike, or whatever vehicle we have is clean, especially if we use it when we go to meetings or when we preach. After all, in the preaching work, we speak to others about life on a clean paradise earth. (Luke 23:43; Revelation 11:18) The appearance of our home and surroundings can show that we are preparing now for life in that clean new world.

**18 Our place of worship.** We show that cleanliness is important to us by keeping our meeting place clean, whether the Kingdom Hall or the place where we have assemblies. When people come to a Kingdom Hall for the first time, they often notice how clean it is. This brings honor to Jehovah. As members of the congregation, we all have the opportunity to help clean our Kingdom Hall and keep it in good repair.—2 Chronicles 34:10.

### GETTING RID OF UNCLEAR HABITS

**19** Even though the Bible does not name every bad habit we should avoid, it does provide principles that help us to understand how Jehovah feels about such things. He does not want us to smoke or to abuse alcohol or drugs. If we are God's friends,

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17. Why do we want to keep our home and surroundings clean?

18. Why do we want our place of worship to be clean?

19. What do we need to avoid?



we will avoid doing these things. Why? Because we deeply respect the gift of life. Such habits can shorten our life, damage our health, and harm the people around us. Many people try to stop these bad habits for the sake of their health. However, as Jehovah's friends, we have the best reason to stop—our love for God. One young woman said: "With Jehovah's help, I cleaned up my life and broke free from my addictions. . . . I think it would have been impossible for me to make these changes on my own." Let's discuss five Bible principles that will help someone to stop harmful habits.

**20** "Since we have these promises, beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Corinthians 7:1) Jehovah wants us to be free of unclean habits that could damage our mind or body.

**21** A powerful reason to "cleanse ourselves of every defilement" is stated at 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18. Jehovah tells us: "Quit touching the unclean thing." Then he promises: "I will take you in. And I will become a father to you, and you will become sons and daughters to me." Yes, Jehovah will love us as a father does his children if we avoid anything that would make us unclean or impure to him.

**22** "You must love Jehovah your God with your

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20, 21. What kind of habits does Jehovah want us to be free of?

22-25. What Scriptural principles can help us to avoid unclean habits?

**whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.”** (Matthew 22:37) This is the most important commandment of all. (Matthew 22:38) Jehovah deserves our complete love. How can we love him completely if we choose to do something that could shorten our life or damage our brain? Rather, we do everything we can to show respect for the life he has given us.

**23 “[Jehovah] gives to all people life and breath and all things.”** (Acts 17:24, 25) If a friend gave you a special gift, would you throw it away or destroy it? Life is an amazing gift from Jehovah. We deeply appreciate this gift. So we want to use our life in a way that will glorify him.—Psalm 36:9.

**24 “You must love your neighbor as yourself.”** (Matthew 22:39) Unclean habits do not hurt only us. They can also hurt those around us, who are often the people we love most. For example, a person who lives in the same house with a smoker can develop serious health problems simply from breathing the smoke. But when we stop bad habits, we show those around us that we love them.—1 John 4:20, 21.

**25 “Continue reminding them to be in subjection and to be obedient to governments and authorities.”** (Titus 3:1) In many lands it is against the law to possess or use certain drugs. Since Jehovah commands us to show respect for governments, we obey such laws.—Romans 13:1.



When we keep clean and pure, we honor Jehovah

**26** If we want to be Jehovah's friend, we may see that we need to make some changes. If so, we should start right away. It is not always easy to stop an unclean habit, but we can do it! Jehovah promises to help us. He says: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One guiding you in the way you should walk." (Isaiah 48:17) When we do our best to keep clean and pure, we can be sure that we are bringing honor to our God.

26. (a) What do we need to do for Jehovah to accept our worship?  
(b) Why is keeping clean in God's eyes the best way to live?

## 1 JEHOVAH IS HOLY IN EVERYTHING HE DOES

“You must be holy, because I am holy.”

—Leviticus 11:45

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### What does it mean to be holy?

**2 Corinthians 6:3, 4,  
17, 18**

Being holy, or clean, involves every aspect of our lives. It includes keeping our body, clothes, and home clean. It also involves keeping our worship, conduct, and thinking pure.

**Exodus 30:17-21;  
Jeremiah 10:12**

Cleanness is important to Jehovah.

**Psalm 19:8, 9;  
Matthew 15:18, 19;**

**Philippians 4:8**

Thoughts lead to actions, so we need to do everything we can to keep our thoughts pure.

## 2 OUR WORSHIP MUST BE PURE

“Keep yourselves clean, you who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah.”—Isaiah 52:11

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### How do we keep our worship pure?

**1 Corinthians 10:21;**  
**James 1:27**

We avoid traditions, customs, and beliefs that are connected to false religion.

**Leviticus 11:44;**  
**Malachi 3:6**

Jehovah has always protected his people by giving them laws and principles.

### 3 BAD HABITS DAMAGE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JEHOVAH

“Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit.”—2 Corinthians 7:1

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**What kind of habits does Jehovah want us to avoid?**

**Matthew 22:39;**

**Acts 17:25;**

**Titus 3:1**

Avoid things that will damage your body or shorten your life, such as smoking or abusing alcohol or drugs. We avoid such habits because we respect our life, the lives of others, and the laws of the country we live in.

**Romans 7:21-25**

Even if we struggle to get rid of a bad habit, we do not give up. With Jehovah's help, we can win our fight.

## 4 WE CAN STOP BAD HABITS

“I pummel my body and lead it as a slave.”

—1 Corinthians 9:27

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### What can help us to stop a bad habit?

#### **Matthew 6:13**

Pray for holy spirit to help you resist a wrong desire.

#### **1 Peter 4:3, 4**

Avoid people, movies, or music that make it more difficult for you to fight bad habits.

#### **Romans 12:1, 2**

Be prepared to explain to others why you choose not to do something, for example, why you do not smoke.

## “FLEE FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY!”

“Deaden, therefore, your body members that are on the earth as respects sexual immorality, uncleanness, uncontrolled sexual passion, hurtful desire, and greediness, which is idolatry.”—COLOSSIANS 3:5.

A FISHERMAN goes to a spot where he can find the type of fish he wants to catch. He selects the bait and casts his line into the water. He waits patiently, and when the fish bites, he snaps the hook into the fish’s jaw and reels in his catch.

<sup>2</sup> In a similar way, people can be caught. For example, the Israelites had almost reached the Promised Land when they camped on the Plains of Moab. The king of Moab promised to give a man named Balaam a lot of money if he would bring a curse on Israel. Eventually, Balaam found a way to make the Israelites bring a curse on themselves. He carefully chose the bait. He sent young Moabite women into the Israelite camp to seduce the men.—Numbers 22:1-7; 31:15, 16; Revelation 2:14.

<sup>3</sup> Did Balaam’s bait work? Yes. Thousands of Israelite men committed “sexual immorality with

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- 1, 2. How did Balaam try to harm Jehovah’s people?
  3. How did the Israelites fall for Balaam’s bait?



the daughters of Moab.” They also began to worship false gods, including a disgusting sex god, the Baal of Peor. As a result, 24,000 Israelites died right at the border of the Promised Land.—Numbers 25: 1-9.

<sup>4</sup> Why did so many Israelites fall for Balaam’s plan? They were thinking only of their own selfish pleasure, and they forgot all that Jehovah had done for them. The Israelites had many reasons to be loyal to God. He had freed them from slavery in Egypt, fed them in the wilderness, and brought them safely to the border of the Promised Land. (Hebrews 3: 12) Still, they were seduced by sexual immorality. The apostle Paul wrote: “Neither let us practice sexual immorality, as some of them committed sexual immorality, only to fall.”—1 Corinthians 10:8.

<sup>5</sup> The new world is very close. So in a way, we are like the Israelites at the border of the Promised Land. (1 Corinthians 10:11) The world we live in today is even more obsessed with sex than the Moabites were. This obsession can easily affect Jehovah’s people. In fact, the bait that the Devil uses most effectively is sexual immorality.—Numbers 25:6, 14; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Jude 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ask yourself, ‘Would I prefer to enjoy some selfish pleasure that will last only a short time, or would I rather live forever in happiness in the new

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4. Why did thousands of Israelites commit immorality?

5, 6. What can we learn from what happened on the Plains of Moab?

world?' Isn't it worth any effort to obey Jehovah's command: "Flee from sexual immorality"—1 Corinthians 6:18.

### WHAT IS SEXUAL IMMORALITY?

<sup>7</sup> Many people today have a brazen attitude and openly disrespect God's laws on sex. In the Bible, sexual immorality refers to sexual activity between people who are not Scripturally married to each other. It includes sexual activity between people of the same gender and sex between humans and animals. Sexual activity can be sexual relations, oral sex, anal sex, or touching another person's genitals in a sexual way.—See Endnote 23.

<sup>8</sup> The Bible makes it clear that if someone continues to practice sexual immorality, he cannot remain in the congregation. (1 Corinthians 6:9; Revelation 22:15) Additionally, an immoral person loses respect for himself and the trust of others. Immorality always results in problems. It usually leads to a guilty conscience and often brings unwanted pregnancy, marriage problems, disease, or even death. (**Read Galatians 6:7, 8.**) If a person really stopped and thought about what immorality leads to, he probably would not want to be immoral. But often a person is thinking only about satisfying his own desires when he takes the first step toward immorality. That first step often involves pornography.

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7, 8. What is sexual immorality? Why is it a serious matter?

### PORNOGRAPHY—A FIRST STEP

<sup>9</sup> Pornography is designed to excite our sexual desires. Today, pornography is present everywhere—in magazines, books, music, and television shows, as well as on the Internet. Many feel that pornography is harmless, but it is actually very dangerous. It can cause a person to become addicted to sex and to develop perverted desires. Once a person becomes involved with pornography, he starts on a path that can lead to such things as a habit of masturbation, marriage problems, and even divorce.—Romans 1:24-27; Ephesians 4:19; see Endnote 24.

<sup>10</sup> It is important that we understand how sexual immorality could attract us. Note this warning found at James 1:14, 15: “Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn sin, when it has been carried out, brings forth death.” So when wrong thoughts enter your mind, get rid of them immediately. If you accidentally see erotic images, look away! Turn off the computer, or change the channel. Do not allow wrong desires into your life. Otherwise, your wrong desires can become so powerful that they will be very difficult to control.—**Read Matthew 5:29, 30.**

<sup>11</sup> Jehovah knows us better than we know ourselves. So he knows how imperfect we are. But he

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9. Why is pornography dangerous?

10. How can the principle found at James 1:14, 15 help us to avoid immorality?

11. How can Jehovah help us when we have wrong thoughts?



**It is wise to be careful when using the Internet**

also knows that we can overcome wrong desires. Jehovah tells us: “Deden, therefore, your body members that are on the earth as respects sexual immorality, uncleanness, uncontrolled sexual passion, hurtful desire, and greediness, which is idolatry.” (Colossians 3:5) Even though that is not easy to do, Jehovah is patient with us and he will help us. (Psalm 68:19) One young brother became trapped in the habit of viewing pornography and masturbating. His friends at school felt that these things were a normal part of growing up, but he said: “It damaged my conscience, and I was drawn into a life of immorality.” He realized he needed to control his desires, and with Jehovah’s help, he was able to break his habit. If you have immoral thoughts, ask Jehovah for “power beyond what is normal” to keep

your thoughts clean.—2 Corinthians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 9:27.

<sup>12</sup> Solomon wrote: “Above all the things that you guard, safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life.” (Proverbs 4:23) Our “heart” is the person we are on the inside, the person Jehovah sees. What we look at can affect us in a powerful way. Faithful Job said: “I have made a covenant with my eyes. So how could I show improper attention to a virgin?” (Job 31:1) Like Job, we need to control what we look at and think about. And like the psalmist, we pray: “Turn my eyes away from looking at what is worthless.”—Psalm 119:37.

### DINAH'S UNWISE CHOICE

<sup>13</sup> Our friends can have a strong influence on us, either in a good way or in a bad way. If you choose friends who follow God's standards, they can help you to do the same. (Proverbs 13:20; **read 1 Corinthians 15:33.**) We can see how important our choice of friends is from what happened to Dinah. She was one of Jacob's daughters, so she was raised in a family who worshipped Jehovah. Dinah was not an immoral person, but she became close friends with Canaanite girls who did not worship Jehovah. The Canaanites had a very different view of sex from that of God's people and were known for being immoral. (Leviticus 18:6-25)

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12. Why do we need to 'guard our heart'?

13. What kind of friends did Dinah choose?

While Dinah was with her friends, she met a young Canaanite man named Shechem, who found her attractive. Shechem was considered “the most honorable” young man in his family. But he did not love Jehovah.—Genesis 34:18, 19.

<sup>14</sup> Shechem did what seemed natural and acceptable to him. Because he was attracted to Dinah, he “took her” and “violated her.” (**Read Genesis 34: 1-4.**) This crime started a series of events that resulted in tragedy for Dinah and her whole family.—Genesis 34:7, 25-31; Galatians 6:7, 8.

<sup>15</sup> We do not have to make the same mistakes that Dinah made to learn that Jehovah's moral standards are good for us. “The one walking with the wise will become wise, but the one who has dealings with the stupid will fare badly.” (Proverbs 13: 20) Make it your goal to understand “the entire course of what is good,” and you will avoid unnecessary pain and suffering.—Proverbs 2:6-9; Psalm 1: 1-3.

<sup>16</sup> We can become wise by studying God's Word, praying to him before we make decisions, and following the good advice from the faithful and discreet slave. (Matthew 24:45; James 1:5) Of course, you know that all of us are weak and imperfect. (Jeremiah 17:9) But how would you react if someone warned you that you were in danger of committing

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14. What happened to Dinah?

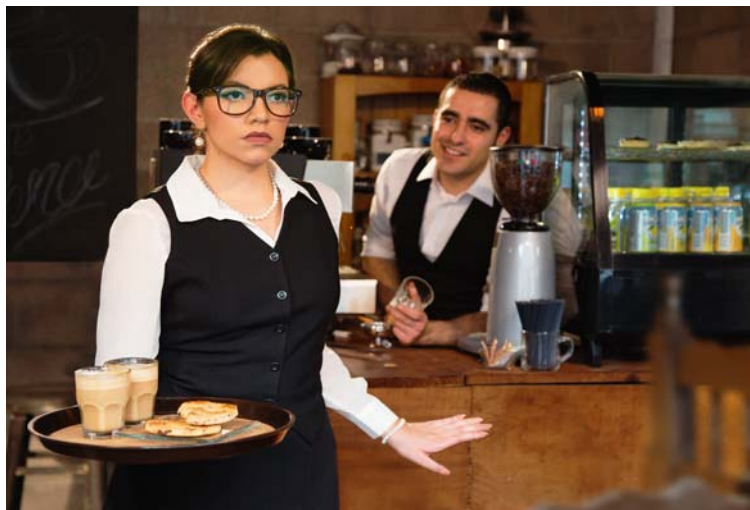
15, 16. How can we become wise?

immorality? Would you be offended, or would you humbly accept the help?—2 Kings 22:18, 19.

<sup>17</sup> For example, imagine this situation. At a sister’s place of work, a man begins to give her special attention and invites her to go out on a date. He doesn’t serve Jehovah, but he seems very nice and kind. Another sister sees them together and later tries to warn her about it. How will the first sister react? Will she defend herself, or will she see the wisdom in the warning? The sister may love Jehovah and want to do what is right. But if she keeps going out with this man, is she ‘fleeing from sexual immorality’ or is she ‘trusting in her own heart’?—Proverbs 22:3; 28:26; Matthew 6:13; 26:41.

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17. Give an example of how counsel from a fellow Christian could help us.



### LEARN FROM JOSEPH'S EXAMPLE

**18** As a young man, Joseph was a slave in Egypt. Day after day, his master's wife asked him to have sex with her, but Joseph knew that doing so would be wrong. Joseph loved Jehovah and wanted to please him. So each time the woman tried to seduce Joseph, he refused. Since he was a slave, he could not just leave his master. One day after the master's wife tried to force him to have sex with her, he "fled outside."—**Read Genesis 39:7-12.**

**19** The situation could have ended very differently if Joseph had allowed himself to think immoral thoughts or if he had daydreamed about her. But Joseph's relationship with Jehovah was more important to him than anything else. He told the woman: "My master . . . has not withheld from me anything at all except you, because you are his wife. So how could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?"—Genesis 39:8, 9.

**20** Although Joseph was far from his family and home, he was always loyal to God, and Jehovah blessed him. (Genesis 41:39-49) Jehovah was delighted with Joseph's loyalty. (Proverbs 27:11) It can be difficult to resist immorality. But remember these words: "O you who love Jehovah, hate what is bad. He is guarding the lives of his loyal ones; he rescues them from the hand of the wicked."—Psalm 97:10.

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18, 19. Explain how Joseph fled from immorality.

20. How do we know that Jehovah was pleased with Joseph?



**21** Every day, Jehovah’s people courageously show that they “hate what is bad” and that they “love what is good.” (Amos 5:15) Whatever your age, you can be faithful to Jehovah. One young brother’s faith was tested in school. A girl told him that she would have sex with him if he helped her on a math test. What did this brother do? He acted like Joseph. He says: “I immediately rejected her offer. By maintaining integrity, I have kept my dignity and self-respect.” Any “temporary enjoyment” that comes from immorality will often lead to pain and heartache. (Hebrews 11:25) Obedience to Jehovah will always bring lasting happiness.—Proverbs 10:22.

### LET JEHOVAH HELP YOU

**22** Satan will try to use sexual immorality to catch us, and this can be a real challenge. All of us probably have wrong thoughts from time to time. (Romans 7:21-25) Jehovah understands this and remembers that “we are dust.” (Psalm 103:14) So, what if a Christian does commit the serious sin of immorality? Is the situation hopeless? No. If a person is truly repentant, Jehovah will help him. God is “ready to forgive.”—Psalm 86:5; James 5:16; **read Proverbs 28:13.**

**23** Jehovah also gives us “gifts in men”—loving elders who care for us. (Ephesians 4:8, 12; James 5:14, 15) He has provided the elders to help us repair our relationship with him.—Proverbs 15:32.

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21. How did one young brother imitate Joseph?

22, 23. How can Jehovah help us even if we sin seriously?

### USE "GOOD SENSE"

**24** In order to make good decisions, we need to understand how Jehovah's laws benefit us. We do not want to be like the young man described at Proverbs 7:6-23. He lacked "good sense," so he was caught by the bait of sexual immorality. Good sense is more than intelligence. When we have good sense, we try to understand God's thinking and apply it in our own life. Remember these wise words: "Whoever acquires good sense loves himself. Whoever treasures discernment will find success."—Proverbs 19:8.

**25** Are you fully convinced that God's standards are right? Do you really believe that following them will make you happy? (Psalm 19:7-10; Isaiah 48:17, 18) If you are not sure yet, remember all the good things Jehovah has done for you. "Taste and see that Jehovah is good." (Psalm 34:8) You will find that the more you do so, the more you will love God. Love what he loves, and hate what he hates. Fill your mind with good thoughts—things that are true, righteous, chaste, lovable, and virtuous. (Philippians 4:8, 9) We can be like Joseph, who benefited from Jehovah's wisdom.—Isaiah 64:8.

**26** Whether you are single or married, Jehovah wants you to enjoy your life and be happy. The next two chapters contain information that can help us to make a success of marriage.

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24, 25. How can "good sense" help us avoid immorality?

26. What will we discuss next?

## 1 IMMORALITY IS A TRAP

“Flee from sexual immorality!”

—1 Corinthians 6:18

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### Why is immorality so dangerous?

**Numbers 25:1-9;**  
**2 Corinthians 2:11**

Satan’s world is obsessed with sex, and this attitude can affect Jehovah’s people. Sexual immorality is one of Satan’s most successful traps, and we need to protect ourselves from it.

**Proverbs 22:3;**  
**Galatians 6:7, 8**

Think of the pain and suffering that result from immorality.

**1 Corinthians 6:9, 10**

If someone continues to practice sexual immorality, he cannot remain in the congregation.

## 2 WE CAN RESIST SEXUAL IMMORALITY

“Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire . . . gives birth to sin.”—James 1:14, 15

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### How can we resist sexual immorality?

**Job 31:1;**

**Jeremiah 17:9;**

**Matthew 5:27, 28;**

**Colossians 3:5**

Reject immoral thoughts immediately, before they grow into wrong desires. Avoid pornography.

**Genesis 39:7-12;**

**2 Corinthians 4:7;**

**James 1:5**

Take action when necessary. Ask Jehovah to help you.

**Proverbs 27:11**

Meditate on the benefits of obeying God’s laws.

**Proverbs 13:20;**

**1 Corinthians 15:33**

Choose friends who love Jehovah and have the same standards that you do.

### 3 NEVER GIVE UP; JEHOVAH WILL HELP YOU

“You, O Jehovah, are good and ready to forgive.”—Psalm 86:5

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**How can Jehovah help us if we commit a serious sin?**

**Psalm 103:14;**

**Proverbs 28:13;**

**Romans 7:21-25**

If a person is repentant, Jehovah will forgive him.

**Galatians 6:1, 2;**

**James 5:14-16**

The congregation elders can help us repair our relationship with God.

**Proverbs 3:5, 6;**

**Philippians 4:8, 9**

Learn to think in a way that pleases Jehovah. Then you will make wise choices.

# MARRIAGE

## —A GIFT FROM GOD

“A threefold cord cannot quickly be torn apart.”

—ECCLESIASTES 4:12.

PICTURE a happy bride and groom on their wedding day. They are excited about their future life and are full of hopes and dreams. They hope their marriage will be long and joyful.

<sup>2</sup> However, many marriages that start out well do not stay that way. For a marriage to last and be happy, a couple needs guidance from God. So let us discuss the Bible’s answer to these questions: What are some benefits of marriage? If you marry, how can you choose your partner well? How can you be a good husband or wife? And what can help a marriage to last?—**Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.**

### SHOULD I GET MARRIED?

<sup>3</sup> Some believe that a person cannot be happy unless he or she gets married. But this is not true. Jesus said that singleness can be a gift. (Matthew 19:11, 12) And the apostle Paul said that there are advan-

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1, 2. (a) What do newly married people hope for? (b) What questions will we discuss in this chapter?

3. Do you think that a person needs to get married to be happy? Explain.

tages to being single. (1 Corinthians 7:32-38) It is up to you whether you choose to marry. You should not allow your friends, family, or culture to pressure you into getting married.

<sup>4</sup> The Bible says that marriage too is a gift from God and that it has some advantages. Jehovah said of the first man, Adam: "It is not good for the man to continue to be alone. I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him." (Genesis 2:18) Jehovah created Eve to be Adam's wife, and they became the first human family. If a couple have children, their marriage should create a stable environment in which they can raise them. But having children is not the only purpose of marriage.—Psalm 127:3; Ephesians 6:1-4.

<sup>5</sup> King Solomon wrote: "Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their hard work. For if one of them falls, the other can help his partner up. But what will happen to the one who falls with no one to help him up? . . . And a threefold cord cannot quickly be torn apart."—Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

<sup>6</sup> A good marriage can be the closest of friendships between two people who help, comfort, and protect each other. Love can make a marriage strong, but the marriage will become even stronger when a husband and wife worship Jehovah. Then their marriage can become like "a threefold cord," a

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4. What are some advantages of a good marriage?

5, 6. How can a marriage be like "a threefold cord"?

rope of three strands tightly woven together. A rope like that is much stronger than a rope of only two strands. A marriage will be strong when Jehovah is part of it.

<sup>7</sup> After a couple get married, they can enjoy satisfying each other's natural sexual desires. (Proverbs 5:18) However, if a person gets married only to satisfy these desires, he or she may not choose a partner wisely. That's why the Bible says marriage should take place after a person is past "the bloom of youth," the time in life when sexual desires are especially strong. (1 Corinthians 7:36) It is better to wait to marry until those feelings calm down. Then a person can think more clearly and make a better choice.—1 Corinthians 7:9; James 1:15.

<sup>8</sup> If you are thinking about getting married, it's good to be realistic and aware that every marriage will have challenges. Paul said that those who marry "will have tribulation in their flesh." (1 Corinthians 7:28) Even the best marriage will go through difficult times. So if you decide that you want to marry, be sure to choose your mate wisely.

### WHOM SHOULD I MARRY?

<sup>9</sup> Here is an important Bible principle to remember when choosing a husband or a wife: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers." (2 Corinthians 6:14) This illustration is based on a practice

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7, 8. What advice did Paul give about marriage?

9, 10. What would happen if we married someone who does not worship Jehovah?



used in farming. If two animals are very different in size or strength, a farmer does not yoke them together to work in the fields. That would not be kind to either animal because both would suffer. In a similar way, a marriage between someone who worships Jehovah and someone who does not will likely result in many problems. So the Bible gives us the wise advice to marry “only in the Lord.”—1 Corinthians 7:39.

<sup>10</sup> At times, some Christians have felt that they would rather marry someone who does not worship Jehovah than be alone. But if we ignore Bible counsel, the result is often pain and unhappiness. As Jehovah’s worshippers, serving him is the most important thing in our life. How would you feel if you could not share that most important part of your life with your mate? Many have decided to stay single rather than marry a person who does not love and serve Jehovah.—**Read Psalm 32:8.**

<sup>11</sup> This does not mean that just anyone who serves Jehovah would be a good husband or wife for you. If you are thinking about getting married, look for someone you really like and get along well with. Wait until you find someone who wants to do the same things in life that you want to do and who puts serving God first. Take time to read and meditate on the helpful advice on marriage provided in publications from the faithful slave.—**Read Psalm 119:105.**

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11. How can you choose your marriage mate well?



Take time to read and meditate on the advice God's Word provides about marriage

<sup>12</sup> In some cultures, it is common for parents to choose a marriage mate for their son or daughter. It is felt that parents know who will be best for their child. This custom was common in Bible times as well. So if your family chooses to follow such a custom, the Bible can help parents know what qualities to look for. For example, when Abraham chose a wife for his son Isaac, his priority was not money or social standing; it was that she loved Jehovah. —Genesis 24:3, 67; see Endnote 25.

12. What can we learn about arranged marriages from the Bible?

### HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR MARRIAGE?

**13** If you are thinking about getting married, make sure that you're ready. You may think you are, but let's discuss what it really means to be prepared for marriage. The answer may surprise you.

**14** The Bible shows that husbands and wives have different roles in the family. So it makes sense that being ready for marriage will mean something different depending on whether you are male or female. If a man is thinking of getting married, he needs to ask himself if he is ready to be the head of a family. Jehovah expects a husband to look after his wife and children materially and emotionally. Most important, the husband needs to take the lead in his family's worship of God. The Bible describes a man who does not take care of his family as "worse than a person without faith." (1 Timothy 5:8) So if you are a man who is thinking about getting married, think of how this Bible principle can apply: "Prepare your outside work, and get everything ready in the field; then build your house." In other words, before you get married, make sure that you can be the kind of husband Jehovah requires you to be.—Proverbs 24:27.

**15** A woman who is thinking about getting married needs to ask herself if she is ready for the responsibilities of being a wife and perhaps a mother. The Bible mentions some of the many ways a good

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13-15. (a) How can a man prepare to be a good husband? (b) How can a woman prepare to be a good wife?

wife takes care of her husband and children. (Proverbs 31:10-31) Today, many men and women think only of what a marriage mate would do for them. But Jehovah wants us to think of what we can do for our mate.

**16** Before you get married, meditate on what Jehovah says about husbands and wives. Being the head of the family does not mean that a man can be a bully, either physically or emotionally. A good family head imitates Jesus, who is always loving and kind to those under his care. (Ephesians 5:23) For her part, a woman needs to think about what it will mean to support her husband's decisions and cooperate with him. (Romans 7:2) She needs to ask herself if she could be happy submitting to an imperfect man. If she does not think she could, she may decide that it's better for her to remain single for now.

**17** Husbands and wives need to care more about their mate's happiness than their own. (**Read Philippians 2:4.**) Paul wrote: "Each one of you must love his wife as he does himself; on the other hand, the wife should have deep respect for her husband." (Ephesians 5:21-33) Both men and women need to feel loved and respected. But for a marriage to work well, a man especially needs to know that his wife respects him, and a woman especially needs to know that her husband loves her.

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16, 17. If you are thinking of getting married, what should you meditate on?

**18** Courtship should be an enjoyable time for a couple as they get to know each other better. It is also a time for them to be realistic and honest so that they can decide if they really want to spend their life together. During courtship, a man and a woman learn to communicate with each other and try to learn what is really in each other's heart. As their relationship deepens, it is natural for them to feel physically attracted to each

18. Why do couples need to be careful during courtship?

During courtship, a man and a woman can learn to communicate with each other



other. But they need to control how they express these feelings before they get married so that they do not do something immoral. True love will help them have self-control and will keep them from doing something that would harm their relationship both with each other and with Jehovah.—1 Thessalonians 4:6.

### HOW CAN I MAKE MY MARRIAGE LAST?

**19** Many books and movies end with a big, happy wedding. In real life, the wedding is only the beginning. Jehovah intended marriage to be a permanent relationship.—Genesis 2:24.

**20** Today, many view marriage as a temporary arrangement. It's easy to get married and easy to get divorced. Some feel that when problems start, it's time to leave their mate and end the marriage. But remember the Bible's illustration of a strong rope made of three strands woven together. A rope like that will not break even under great pressure. When we look to Jehovah for help, our marriage can last. Jesus said: "What God has yoked together, let no man put apart."—Matthew 19:6.

**21** We all have strengths and weaknesses. It is very easy to focus on the weaknesses of others, especially those of our marriage mate. But if we do this, we will not be happy. On the other hand, if we focus on our mate's good qualities, we can have a happy

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19, 20. How do Christians view marriage?

21. What will help a husband and wife to love each other?

marriage. Is it realistic to have this view of an imperfect mate? Yes! Jehovah knows how imperfect we are, yet he focuses on our good qualities. Imagine if he didn't! The psalmist said: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, then who, O Jehovah, could stand?" (Psalm 130:3) Husbands and wives can imitate Jehovah by looking for the good in their mate and being quick to forgive.—**Read Colossians 3:13.**

Make God's Word part of your marriage  
from the beginning



**22** As the years go by, a marriage can become stronger. Abraham and Sarah had a long and happy marriage. When Jehovah told Abraham to leave their home in the city of Ur, Sarah was possibly more than 60 years old. Imagine how difficult it was for her to leave her comfortable home to live in tents. But Sarah was a good friend and partner to her husband, and she really respected him. So she supported Abraham's decisions and helped to make them a success.—Genesis 18:12; 1 Peter 3:6.

**23** Of course, having a good marriage does not mean that a husband and wife will always agree on everything. Once, when Abraham did not agree with Sarah, Jehovah told him: "Listen to her." Abraham did so, and the results were good. (Genesis 21:9-13) If at times you and your mate do not agree, don't get discouraged. The important thing is that even when you disagree, you still treat each other with love and respect.

**24** In the Christian congregation, there are thousands of happily married couples. If you want to get married, remember that choosing your mate is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. It will affect the rest of your life, so look to Jehovah for guidance. Then you will be able to choose your mate wisely, prepare well for marriage, and work to build a strong and loving bond that will bring honor to Jehovah.

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22, 23. How did Abraham and Sarah set a good example for married people?

24. How can our marriage bring honor to Jehovah?



## **1** MARRIAGE IS A BLESSING FROM JEHOVAH

“A threefold cord cannot quickly be torn apart.”—Ecclesiastes 4:12

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### **Why do people get married?**

**Genesis 2:18;**

**Psalms 127:3;**

**Proverbs 5:18;**

**Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10**

Marriage can provide companionship, support, and a good environment in which to raise children.

## 2 CHOOSE YOUR MATE WISELY

“I will . . . instruct you in the way you should go.”—Psalm 32:8

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### What should we consider if we want to get married?

**1 Corinthians 7:39;**

**2 Corinthians 6:14**

It is wise to marry only someone who focuses his or her life on serving Jehovah.

**1 Corinthians 7:36**

It is best to wait to get married until we are past the time in life when sexual desires are especially strong.

**1 Corinthians 7:28**

Be realistic about marriage. All marriages have challenges.

### 3 HUSBANDS AND WIVES HAVE DIFFERENT ROLES IN THE FAMILY

“It is not good for the man to continue to be alone. I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him.”—Genesis 2:18

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#### What does Jehovah expect of a husband and a wife?

**Ephesians 5:23;**  
**1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:8**

A husband takes the lead in his family’s worship and looks after his wife and children materially and emotionally. He takes the lead in teaching and disciplining the children.

**Proverbs 31:10-31;**  
**Romans 7:2**

A wife is a good friend and partner to her husband. She supports his decisions and cares for the household. She helps her husband to teach their children.

**Ephesians 5:33;**  
**Philippians 2:4**

Both husband and wife need to care more about each other’s happiness than their own.

## 4 JEHOVAH CAN HELP OUR MARRIAGE TO LAST

“They will become one flesh.”—Genesis 2:24

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### How can our marriage stay strong?

**Proverbs 3:5, 6;**  
**Matthew 19:6**

Jehovah intended marriage to be a permanent relationship. He gives us the best advice about marriage.

**Psalm 130:3;**  
**Colossians 3:13**

A couple need to be tolerant of each other's weaknesses. They need to forgive each other and look for the good in each other.

## AFTER THE WEDDING DAY

“Love never fails.”  
—1 CORINTHIANS 13:8.

MARRIAGE is a gift from Jehovah. It can make a person’s life happier. Still, every marriage will have its problems. It might even seem as if the problems will never end, and a husband and wife may not feel as close as they once did.

<sup>2</sup> We should not be surprised if our marriage has difficulties from time to time. Yet, difficulties do not mean that our marriage has failed. Even couples who had very serious problems have found ways to heal their relationship and make their marriage stronger. How?

### DRAWING CLOSER TO GOD AND TO EACH OTHER

<sup>3</sup> Marriage brings together two different people, each with his or her own likes and dislikes, ideas, and ways of doing things. Also, the husband and wife may come from different backgrounds or cultures. It takes time and effort for a couple to get to know and understand each other well.

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- 1, 2. Do marriage problems mean that a marriage has failed? Explain.
  - 3, 4. What can sometimes happen in a marriage?



The Bible's advice is essential to a good marriage

<sup>4</sup> As time goes by, a husband and wife can become so involved in their own personal concerns that they drift apart. It might seem as if they are living separate lives. What can help them to become closer?

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah provides excellent advice that can help you and your mate to draw closer to him and to each other. (Psalm 25:4; Isaiah 48:17, 18) He tells us: "Let marriage be honorable among all." (Hebrews 13:4) Something that you view as honorable is precious and valuable. You protect it and do not take it for granted. That is how Jehovah wants us to view marriage.

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5. (a) What can help a Christian to draw closer to his or her mate?  
(b) According to Hebrews 13:4, how should we view marriage?

## LOVE FOR JEHOVAH CAN HELP YOUR MARRIAGE

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah performed the first marriage. His Son, Jesus, said: “Have you not read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said: ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh’? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together, let no man put apart.” (Matthew 19:4-6) From the very beginning, Jehovah intended for marriage to be permanent. He wanted families to be close and happy and to enjoy life together.

<sup>7</sup> However, married couples today face more stress and pressure than ever before. Sometimes the pressure is so great that they think their marriage can’t be saved, and they give up. But understanding how Jehovah views marriage can help us.—1 John 5:3.

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah’s guidance is always for our good. As we have seen, he advises us: “Let marriage be honorable.” (Hebrews 13:4; Ecclesiastes 5:4) If we follow Jehovah’s direction even when it is difficult, we will definitely benefit.—1 Thessalonians 1:3; Hebrews 6:10.

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6. What does Matthew 19:4-6 tell us about Jehovah’s view of marriage?

7. How can husbands and wives strengthen their marriage?

8, 9. (a) When should we follow Jehovah’s guidance on marriage? (b) How can we show that our marriage is precious to us?

<sup>9</sup> Because our marriage is precious to us, we want to avoid doing or saying anything that could damage it. Instead, we want to make our relationship with our mate stronger. How can we do that?

### **HONOR YOUR MARRIAGE BY WHAT YOU SAY AND DO**

<sup>10</sup> There are various ways a person could cause pain to his or her mate. We know that Christians should never hit their mates or do anything to harm them physically. Yet, we might hurt one another with our words. Words can become weapons. One woman said: "My husband strikes me with words. I may not have visible bruises, but his constant cutting remarks, such as 'You're a burden!' and 'You're worthless!' have scarred my heart." One husband said that his wife constantly put him down with her words and called him names. He said: "I can't repeat in polite company the things she says to me. That's why I can't talk to her and why I stay at work so late. It's a lot safer than coming home." Abusive speech, saying cruel and unkind things that cause emotional pain, is common today.

<sup>11</sup> When a husband and wife speak cruelly to each other, it causes emotional wounds that take a long time to heal. Clearly, that is not how Jehovah wants a husband and wife to treat each other. But it is pos-

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10, 11. (a) What serious problem exists in some marriages?  
(b) Why is the way we speak to our husband or wife important?



sible to hurt your mate without even realizing it. You may feel that you are kind to your mate, but how does your mate feel? If something you said hurt your mate, would you be willing to change? —Galatians 5:15; read Ephesians 4:31.

<sup>12</sup> The way you speak to your mate, whether in public or in private, matters to Jehovah. (Read 1 Peter 3:7.) James 1:26 reminds us: “If any man thinks he is a worshipper of God but does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he is deceiving his own heart, and his worship is futile.”

12. What can affect a married person’s relationship with Jehovah?



**13** There are other ways a couple should be sensitive to each other. For example, how would your mate feel if you began to spend a lot of time with someone else? Although it might be for an innocent reason, such as working in the ministry or helping with a problem, would your mate feel hurt? One Christian wife said: "To note that my husband gives so much time and attention to another sister in the congregation hurts me. It makes me feel inferior."

**14** As Christians, we have responsibilities toward our parents and the brothers and sisters in our congregation. Still, when we get married, our main responsibility is to our husband or wife. Jehovah said that a husband "will stick to his wife." (Genesis 2:24) Our mate's feelings should be very important to us. Ask yourself: 'Am I giving my mate the time, attention, and affection he or she needs and deserves?'

**15** If we become too close to someone other than our husband or wife, it will put stress on our marriage. We could become emotionally attached to and develop romantic feelings for the other person. (Matthew 5:28) Those feelings could grow and cause you to do something that dishonors your marriage.

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13. What is another way that someone could hurt his marriage mate?

14. (a) What basic truth do we learn at Genesis 2:24? (b) What should we ask ourselves?

15. Why should married Christians avoid becoming too close to someone other than their husband or wife?

### “LET THE MARRIAGE BED BE WITHOUT DEFILEMENT”

**16** After saying: “Let marriage be honorable,” the Bible says: “Let the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers.” (Hebrews 13:4) Here, “the marriage bed” refers to the sexual relationship between a husband and wife. (Proverbs 5:18) How can we show respect for this relationship and not defile it?

**17** Some people today do not think that there is anything wrong with being unfaithful to their mate. We cannot let ourselves be influenced by that attitude. Jehovah makes it very clear that he hates sexual immorality and adultery. (**Read Romans 12:9**; Hebrews 10:31; 12:29) If we were to have sex with anyone other than our husband or wife, we would defile our marriage. We would show that we do not respect Jehovah’s standards, and we would harm our relationship with him. So we must avoid taking even the first step that could lead to adultery. This includes avoiding improper thoughts about another person.—Job 31:1.

**18** In ancient Israel under the Law of Moses, adultery was a very serious sin, as serious as worshipping false gods. The punishment for both was death.

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16. What command does the Bible give about marriage?

17. (a) How do many people today view adultery? (b) How should Christians view adultery?

18. (a) Why is adultery like worshipping false gods? (b) How does Jehovah view adultery?

(Leviticus 20:2, 10) How was adultery similar to worshipping false gods? If an Israelite worshipped false gods, he broke his promise to be faithful to Jehovah. If he committed adultery, he broke his promise to be faithful to his mate. (Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 5:9; read **Malachi 2:14.**) Clearly, in the past, Jehovah viewed adultery as a very serious sin.

**19** What about today? Although we are no longer under the Law of Moses, Jehovah's view of adultery has not changed. Just as we would never worship a false god, we should never be unfaithful to our mate. (Psalm 51:1, 4; Colossians 3:5) If we were, we would dishonor both our marriage and our God, Jehovah.—See Endnote 26.

### HOW TO MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE STRONGER

**20** How can you make your marriage stronger? God's Word states: "By wisdom a house is built up, and by discernment it is made secure." (Proverbs 24:3) A house can be cold and empty or warm, comfortable, and secure. It is similar with a marriage. A wise person will make sure that his or her marriage is secure, pleasant, and enjoyable.

**21** Speaking of that house, the Bible continues: "By knowledge its rooms are filled with all sorts of precious and pleasant treasures." (Proverbs 24:4) What you learn from God's Word can change your marriage for the better. (Romans 12:2; Philip-

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19. What can help us be resolved not to commit adultery?

20. How can wisdom benefit a marriage?

21. How can knowledge make a marriage stronger?

pians 1:9) When you read the Bible and our publications together as a couple, discuss how you can apply what you learn. Look for ways you can show each other love and respect, as well as ways to be kind and thoughtful. Ask Jehovah to help you develop qualities that will strengthen your marriage and make you more lovable to your mate.—Proverbs 15:16, 17; 1 Peter 1:7.

**22** We should do everything we can to treat our husband or wife with love, respect, and honor. Then our marriage will become warmer and stronger. And most important, we will make Jehovah happy.—Psalm 147:11; Romans 12:10.

22. Why should we show love, respect, and honor to our marriage mate?

Depend on Jehovah for guidance during family worship



## 1 OUR MARRIAGE CAN BRING HONOR TO JEHOVAH

“Love never fails.”—1 Corinthians 13:8

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### What can help us resolve difficulties in our marriage?

**Ecclesiastes 5:4;**

**Matthew 19:4-6**

Every marriage will have its challenges. But do not be quick to give up on your marriage.

**Psalm 25:4;**

**Isaiah 48:17, 18;**

**Matthew 6:33, 34**

When a husband and wife draw closer to Jehovah, their marriage can grow stronger.

## 2 WHAT WE SAY AND DO AFFECTS OUR MARRIAGE

“They will become one flesh.”—Genesis 2:24

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### How can we avoid hurting our marriage mate?

#### **Matthew 5:28;**

#### **Ephesians 4:31**

Be faithful to your mate even in your thoughts. Be aware of your mate’s feelings. If you learn that you are causing him or her pain, be willing to change.

#### **Galatians 5:15**

We would never want to hurt our mate physically or emotionally. Cruel words only harm a marriage.

#### **Proverbs 5:18;**

#### **Hebrews 13:4**

Jehovah views adultery as a serious sin. We must be resolved to remain faithful to our mate and treat our marriage as precious. We would never want to dishonor Jehovah or our mate.

### 3 YOU CAN MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE STRONGER

“By wisdom a house is built up.”—Proverbs 24:3

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**What can you do to have a strong and happy marriage?**

**Proverbs 24:4;**

**Matthew 6:14, 15;**

**Romans 12:2;**

**1 Peter 3:1**

Take time to communicate with your mate. Treat your husband or wife with love, respect, and kindness. Learn to forgive quickly.

**Proverbs 14:1; 31:29;**

**Philippians 1:9; 2:4;**

**1 Peter 3:7**

Ask Jehovah to help you become a better husband or wife. Look for ways to be kinder and more thoughtful.

**Romans 12:10;**

**1 Peter 4:8**

If you do all you can to show that you cherish and honor your mate, your marriage can grow stronger and you will make Jehovah happy.



## SPEAK WHAT “IS GOOD FOR BUILDING UP”

“Let a rotten word not come out of your mouth,  
but only what is good for building up.”

—EPHESIANS 4:29.

A FATHER gives a bicycle to his teenage son. He is happy to give his son such a special gift. But what if the son rides the bike recklessly, hits someone, and injures him? How would the father feel?

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah is the Giver of “every good gift and every perfect present.” (James 1:17) One of his good gifts to us is our ability to speak. The gift of speech allows us to express our thoughts and feelings. We are able to say things that help people and make them feel good. But what we say can also harm others and cause them pain.

<sup>3</sup> Speech is very powerful, and Jehovah teaches us how to use our gift of speech well. He tells us: “Let a rotten word not come out of your mouth, but only what is good for building up as the need may be, to impart what is beneficial to the hearers.” (Ephesians 4:29) Let’s examine how we can use this gift from

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1-3. (a) What is one of the good gifts Jehovah has given us? How could we misuse it? (b) How should we use the gift of speech?

God in a way that will please him and encourage others.

### BE CAREFUL WITH YOUR SPEECH

**4** Words have power, so we need to be careful about what we say and how we say it. Proverbs 15:4 says: "A calm tongue is a tree of life, but twisted speech causes despair." Just as a beautiful tree is refreshing and gives life, kind words refresh the hearer. On the other hand, harsh words hurt others and make them feel bad.—Proverbs 18:21.


**5** "Thoughtless speech is like the stabs of a sword," says Proverbs 12:18. Unkind words can cause emotional pain and destroy relationships. Perhaps you can recall when someone spoke unkindly to you and hurt you deeply. Yet, that proverb continues: "The tongue of the wise is a healing." Thoughtful speech can mend an aching heart and heal friendships that have been damaged by misunderstandings. (**Read Proverbs 16:24.**) If we remember that our words affect others, we will use them carefully.

**6** Another reason to be careful with our speech is that **we are all imperfect**. "The inclination of the heart of man is bad," and our words often reveal what is in our heart. (Genesis 8:21; Luke 6:45) It can be a real struggle to control what we say. (**Read**

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4, 5. What can we learn about the power of speech from Bible proverbs?

6. Why is it a struggle to control what we say?



## Calm speech is refreshing

**James 3:2-4.)** But we need to keep trying to improve how we speak to others.

<sup>7</sup> We also need to be careful with our speech because **we are accountable to Jehovah** for what we say and how we say it. James 1:26 says: “If any man thinks he is a worshipper of God but does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he is deceiving his own heart, and his worship is futile.” The original word translated “futile” can also mean “useless.” (1 Corinthians 15:17) So if we are careless with our speech, we can damage and even destroy our relationship with Jehovah.—James 3:8-10.

<sup>8</sup> Clearly, we have good reasons to be careful about what we say and how we say it. To help us use our gift of speech the way Jehovah wants us to, we need to know what kinds of speech to avoid.

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7, 8. How can our words affect our relationship with Jehovah?

## WORDS THAT TEAR DOWN

<sup>9</sup> Using **obscene, or unclean, language** is very common today. Many think that they need to swear and use vulgar words to get their point across. Comedians often rely on dirty jokes and obscene language to make people laugh. However, the apostle Paul said: "You must put them all away from you: wrath, anger, badness, abusive speech, and obscene talk out of your mouth." (Colossians 3:8) He also said that "obscene jesting" should "not even be mentioned among" true Christians.—Ephesians 5:3, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Obscene language is displeasing to Jehovah and to those who love him. It is unclean. In the Bible, "uncleanness" is included in "the works of the flesh." (Galatians 5:19-21) "Uncleanness" can include a wide variety of sins, and one unclean habit can lead to another. If a person made a habit of using extremely unclean, obscene language and refused to stop, this could indicate that he should no longer be part of the congregation.—2 Corinthians 12:21; Ephesians 4:19; see Endnote 23.

<sup>11</sup> We also need to avoid **harmful gossip**. It is natural for us to be interested in others and to share news about friends and family. Even in the first century, early Christians wanted to know how their brothers and sisters were doing and what they could do to help them. (Ephesians 6:21, 22; Colossians 4:

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9, 10. (a) What kind of speech is very common in today's world? (b) Why do we avoid using obscene speech?

11, 12. (a) What is harmful gossip? (b) Why should we avoid slandering someone?

8, 9) But it is easy for conversations about other people to turn into harmful gossip. If we repeat gossip, we may say things that are not true or talk about things that should be kept private. If we are not careful, this negative talk can turn into false accusations, or **slander**. The Pharisees slandered Jesus when they accused him of things he had not done. (Matthew 9: 32-34; 12:22-24) Slander hurts a person's reputation, leads to arguments and pain, and destroys friendships.—Proverbs 26:20.

**12** Jehovah wants us to use our words to help and encourage others, not to turn friends into enemies. Jehovah hates those "sowing contentions among brothers." (Proverbs 6:16-19) The first slanderer was Satan the Devil, who slandered God. (Revelation 12: 9, 10) In today's world, it is common for people to lie about one another. But this should not happen in the Christian congregation. (Galatians 5:19-21) So we should be careful about what we say and always think before we speak. Before you repeat something about someone else, ask yourself: 'Is what I am about to say true? Is it kind? Is it helpful? Would I want the person I'm talking about to hear what I say? How would I feel if someone said this about me?'—**Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11.**

**13** At times, all of us say things we later regret. But we do not want to make a habit of criticizing others or saying unkind or cruel things. **Abusive speech**

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13, 14. (a) What can abusive speech do to people? (b) What is reviling? Why should Christians avoid reviling others?

has no place in our lives. Paul said: "Put away from yourselves every kind of malicious bitterness, anger, wrath, screaming, and abusive speech." (Ephesians 4:31) Other Bibles translate "abusive speech" as "evil words," "injurious language," and "insulting language." Abusive speech robs people of their dignity and makes them feel worthless. Children in particular can be hurt very easily, so we want to be especially careful not to crush them with our words. —Colossians 3:21.

<sup>14</sup> The Bible warns us about a very strong form of abusive speech—**reviling**. Reviling is constantly insulting others with the intention of hurting them. How sad it would be if someone treated his mate or children in that way! In fact, a person who refused to stop reviling others would no longer qualify to be part of the congregation. (1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 6:9, 10) As we have learned, if we say things that are obscene, untrue, or unkind, we will harm our relationship with Jehovah and with others.

### WORDS THAT BUILD UP

<sup>15</sup> How can we use our gift of speech the way Jehovah wants us to? Even though the Bible does not tell us exactly what we should or should not say, it does tell us to speak "only what is good for building up." (Ephesians 4:29) Speech that builds up is clean, kind, and true. Jehovah wants us to use our words to encourage and help others. This may be challenging.

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15. What kind of speech strengthens relationships?

It takes more effort to say positive things than to say cruel and careless things. (Titus 2:8) Let's discuss some ways we can build others up by what we say.

<sup>16</sup> Both Jehovah and Jesus generously give **commendation**. We want to imitate them. (Matthew 3:17; 25:19-23; John 1:47) To give commendation that will really encourage someone involves being thoughtful and showing personal interest. "A word spoken at the right time—how good it is!" says Proverbs 15:23. We are encouraged when someone sincerely commends us for our hard work or expresses appreciation for something we have done.—**Read Matthew 7:12**; see Endnote 27.

<sup>17</sup> If you make it a habit to look for the good in others, it will be easier to give sincere commendation. For example, perhaps you notice that someone in the congregation prepares well for his talks or makes an effort to comment at meetings. A young person may take a fine stand for the truth in school, or an older person may regularly share in the ministry. Your words of appreciation may be just what they need. It is also very important for a husband to tell his wife that he loves and appreciates her. (Proverbs 31:10, 28) Just as plants need light and water, people need to feel appreciated. This is especially true of children. Look for opportunities to commend them for their good qualities and

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16, 17. (a) Why should we commend others? (b) Whom can we commend?

efforts. Commendation can build their courage and confidence and can make them try even harder to do what is right.

**18** When we **encourage** and **comfort** others, we follow Jehovah's example. He cares deeply about "the lowly" and "those being crushed." (Isaiah 57:15) Jehovah wants us to "keep encouraging one another" and to "speak consolingly to those who are depressed." (1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14) When we try to do this, he sees and appreciates our efforts.

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18, 19. Why should we do our best to encourage and comfort others? How can we do so?





**19** You may notice that someone in the congregation is discouraged or depressed. What can you say that might help? You may not be able to fix the problem, but you can let the person know that you care. For example, you can arrange to spend time with him or her. You could read an encouraging Bible verse and even offer to say a prayer. (Psalm 34:18; Matthew 10:29-31) Reassure such ones that their brothers and sisters in the congregation love them. (1 Corinthians 12:12-26; James 5:14, 15) And speak in a way that shows that you really mean and believe what you say.—**Read Proverbs 12:25.**



We can encourage  
and comfort others  
by what we say  
and how we say it

**20** We also build others up when we give good **advice**. As imperfect people, we all need advice from time to time. Proverbs 19:20 says: "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, in order to become wise in your future." Elders are not the only ones who can offer advice or give counsel. Parents need to guide their children. (Ephesians 6:4) And sisters can give good advice to one another. (Titus 2:3-5) Because we love our brothers and sisters, we want to make sure that we give advice in a way that will not make them feel bad. What can help us?

**21** Perhaps you remember a time when someone gave you some good advice in a way that was easy to accept. What made it so effective? You probably felt that the person really cared about you. Or maybe he or she spoke in a kind and loving way. (Colossians 4:6) Likely, the advice was based on the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16) Whether we quote directly from the Bible or not, there should be a Scriptural basis for any advice we give. Nobody should force his opinions on others or misapply scriptures to support his own ideas. Remembering the way advice was given to you can help you when you give advice to others.

**22** The ability to speak is a gift from God. Our love for him should move us to use it properly. Remember that words have power to tear down or to build up. Therefore, let us do all we can to use our words to strengthen and encourage others.

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20, 21. What makes it easier for people to accept advice?

22. How would you like to use your gift of speech?

## 1 OUR ABILITY TO SPEAK IS A GIFT FROM GOD

“Every good gift and every perfect present is from above.”—James 1:17

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### How can we show that we appreciate this gift?

**Ephesians 4:29;**

**James 1:26**

Words have power. We need to think carefully about what we say and how we say it.

**Proverbs 12:18; 15:23;**

**Matthew 7:12**

Saying the wrong thing at the wrong time can lead to arguments and pain.

**Proverbs 16:24;**

**Isaiah 57:15;**

**1 Thessalonians 5:11**

Use your gift of speech as Jehovah intended. Use your words to heal, encourage, teach, comfort, motivate, and help others.

## 2 SPEAK IN A WAY THAT PLEASES GOD

“Let your words always be gracious.”

—Colossians 4:6

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### How can our speech affect our family and friends?

**Proverbs 31:28;**  
**Revelation 2:1-3**

Everyone needs love and appreciation, especially from family members.

**Proverbs 6:16-19; 26:20;**  
**Colossians 3:8, 21;**  
**1 Thessalonians 4:11**

Abusive or vulgar speech and constant criticism are very damaging. False accusations can harm someone's reputation and destroy peace.

**Proverbs 15:1, 2;**  
**Philippians 2:3, 4;**  
**James 1:19**

Show by your speech that you care more about others than yourself. Listen carefully.

### 3 ADVICE SHOULD BE GUIDED BY LOVE

“Listen to counsel and accept discipline, in order to become wise in your future.”

—Proverbs 19:20

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#### How can we give good advice?

**Psalm 34:18;**  
**Matthew 10:29-31;**  
**2 Timothy 3:16**

Advice should be based on the Bible and given in a kind way.

**Proverbs 12:25;**  
**1 Thessalonians 5:14;**  
**James 3:2-4**

Use your gift of speech to strengthen and encourage others.

## DO ALL CELEBRATIONS PLEASE GOD?

“Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord.”—EPHESIANS 5:10.

JESUS said: “True worshippers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for indeed, the Father is looking for ones like these to worship him.” (John 4:23; 6:44) Each of us must “keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:10) This is not always easy. Satan tries to mislead us so that we will do things that displease Jehovah.—Revelation 12:9.

<sup>2</sup> How does Satan try to mislead us? One way is by confusing us about what is right and what is wrong. Notice what happened to the nation of Israel when they were camped near Mount Sinai. Moses had gone up the mountain, and the people were waiting for him to return to the camp. Eventually, they got tired of waiting and asked Aaron to make a god for them. He made a golden idol in the shape of a calf. Then the people had a festival. They danced around the calf and bowed down to it. They

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1. What do we need to do to make sure that our worship pleases Jehovah, and why?
  2. Explain what happened near Mount Sinai.

believed that by bowing down to the calf, they were actually worshipping Jehovah. But the fact that the people viewed this event as “a festival to Jehovah” did not make it right. Jehovah viewed it as idolatry, and many of them died. (Exodus 32:1-6, 10, 28) What is the lesson for us? Don’t let yourself be fooled. “Touch nothing unclean,” and let Jehovah teach you what is right and what is wrong.—Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 44:23; Galatians 5:9.

<sup>3</sup> When Jesus was on earth, he trained his apostles to set the example in clean worship. After his death, the apostles continued to teach Jehovah’s principles to new disciples. But after the apostles died, false teachers began to bring wrong ideas and pagan customs and celebrations into the congregation. They even renamed some of those pagan celebrations to make them appear Christian. (2 Thessalonians 2:7, 10; 2 John 6, 7) Many of these celebrations are still popular today, and they still promote false beliefs, even demonism.\*—Revelation 18:2-4, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Around the world today, celebrations and holidays are an important part of people’s lives. However, as you continue to learn how Jehovah views matters, you may see the need to adjust your thinking about certain celebrations. This may not be

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\* You can find information about specific celebrations in the *Watch Tower Publications Index*, in the *Research Guide for Jehovah’s Witnesses*, and on [jw.org](http://jw.org).

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3, 4. Why is it good to examine the origins of many popular celebrations?

easy, but you can be sure that Jehovah will help you. Let's examine the origins of some popular celebrations so that we can understand how Jehovah feels about them.

### HOW DID CHRISTMAS BEGIN?

<sup>5</sup> In many parts of the world, Christmas is celebrated on December 25, which most people think is the date of Jesus' birth. The Bible does not tell us on what day or even in what month Jesus was born, but it does tell us something about the time of year. Luke wrote that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, "shepherds [were] living out of doors," caring for their flocks. (Luke 2:8-11) In the month of December, Bethlehem is cold, rainy, and snowy, so shepherds would not have been staying outside with their flocks at night. What do we learn from this? Jesus was born when the weather was mild, not in December. Both the Bible and historical evidence indicate that he was born sometime during the months we now know as September and October.

<sup>6</sup> So how did Christmas begin? It came from pagan festivals, such as the Roman festival Saturnalia, a celebration dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture. *The Encyclopedia Americana* says: "Saturnalia, a Roman feast celebrated in mid-December, provided the model for many of the merry-making customs of Christmas. From this celebration, for ex-

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5. What evidence is there that Jesus was not born on December 25?  
6, 7. (a) How did many popular Christmas customs begin?  
(b) What should be our reason for giving gifts?





Knowing the origins of celebrations can help us know what to avoid

ample, were derived the elaborate feasting, the giving of gifts, and the burning of candles.” Also, the birthday of the Persian sun-god Mithra was celebrated on December 25.

<sup>7</sup> However, most people who celebrate Christmas today are not thinking of its pagan origins. They simply look forward to Christmas as a time to be with family, enjoy good food, and give gifts. Of course, we love our family and friends, and Jehovah

wants his servants to share with one another. As 2 Corinthians 9:7 tells us, "God loves a cheerful giver." Jehovah does not want us to give to others only on special occasions. Jehovah's people enjoy giving gifts and getting together with friends and family at any time of the year, without expecting anything in return. They give because they love others.—Luke 14:12-14.

<sup>8</sup> To support the idea of giving gifts at Christmas, many people say that three wise men brought gifts to the newborn baby Jesus in the stable. It is true that a group of men did visit Jesus and bring gifts. In Bible times, it was common to bring gifts to an important person. (1 Kings 10:1, 2, 10, 13) But did you know that the Bible says these men were astrologers, people who practiced magic and who did not worship Jehovah? Also, they did not visit Jesus when he was a newborn baby in a stable. They visited him later, when he was a "young child" living in a house.—Matthew 2:1, 2, 11.

### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT BIRTHDAYS?

<sup>9</sup> The day that a baby is born is a happy one. (Psalm 127:3) But that does not mean that we should celebrate birthdays. Think about this: Only two birthday celebrations are mentioned in the Bible. One was the birthday of an Egyptian Pharaoh, and the other was the birthday of King Herod Anti-

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8. Did the astrologers give gifts to Jesus when he was a newborn baby? Explain.

9. What birthday celebrations are mentioned in the Bible?

pas. (Read **Genesis 40:20-22**; **Mark 6:21-29**.) Neither of these rulers was a servant of Jehovah. In fact, we never read in the Bible that a worshipper of Jehovah celebrated a birthday.

<sup>10</sup> *The World Book Encyclopedia* says that the early Christians “considered the celebration of anyone’s birth to be a pagan custom.” Such customs were based on false beliefs. For example, the ancient Greeks believed that every person was protected by a spirit that was present at his birth. And they thought that spirit was connected to a god born on the same date as the person. In addition to such pagan beliefs, birthdays are also connected with astrology and horoscopes.

<sup>11</sup> Many people feel that their birthday is a special day on which they should be shown appreciation and love. But we can show love to our family and friends throughout the year, rather than just on one specific day. Jehovah wants us to be kind and generous all the time. (Read **Acts 20:35**.) We are grateful to him for the precious gift of life every day, not just on our birthday.—Psalm 8:3, 4; 36:9.

<sup>12</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:1 says: “A good name is better than good oil, and the day of death is better than the day of birth.” How can the day of our death be better than the day of our birth? When we are born, we have not yet done anything with our life,

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10. How did the early Christians view birthday celebrations?

11. How does Jehovah feel about our being generous?

12. How can the day of our death be better than the day of our birth?



**True Christians give to others because they love them**

either good or bad. But when we use our life to serve Jehovah and do good for others, we build “a good name,” or reputation, and Jehovah will remember us even after we have died. (Job 14:14, 15) Jehovah’s people do not celebrate their own birthday or that of Jesus. In fact, the only event Jesus commanded us to observe is the Memorial of his death.—Luke 22:17-20; Hebrews 1:3, 4.

### THE ORIGINS OF EASTER

<sup>13</sup> Many people believe that they are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus when they celebrate Easter. But actually, the celebration of Easter has been linked to Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon pagan goddess of the dawn and of spring. *The Dictionary of Mythology* explains that she was also a fertility goddess. Some Easter customs are connected with this. For example, eggs “have been prominent as symbols of new life and resurrection,” says the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Also, rabbits have long been used as symbols of fertility in pagan worship. It is clear that Easter is not related to the resurrection of Jesus.

<sup>14</sup> When Jehovah sees people mixing false religious customs with the resurrection of his Son, is he pleased? Of course not. (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18) In fact, Jehovah never asked us to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection.

### WHAT IS HALLOWEEN?

<sup>15</sup> Halloween, also called All Hallows’ Eve or the eve of All Saints’ Day, is connected with witches, goblins, and ghosts. This celebration is not new. On the full moon closest to November 1, the ancient Celts of Britain and Ireland celebrated the festival of Samhain. They believed that during this festival, spirits of the dead returned to earth. People put out

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13, 14. What is the celebration of Easter connected to?

15. How did Halloween begin?

food and drink so that the spirits would not harm them. When children today dress in costumes and go from house to house saying "Trick or treat," they do not realize that they are imitating this ancient demonic custom.

### WEDDINGS THAT PLEASE GOD

**16** A wedding is a happy occasion. Weddings are celebrated in many different ways around the world. People usually don't think about where wedding customs come from, so they may not know that some customs come from pagan religious beliefs. But a Christian couple who are planning their wedding want to make sure that it will please Jehovah. If they learn about the origins of wedding customs, they will be able to make good decisions.—Mark 10:6-9.

**17** Some wedding customs are believed to bring 'good luck' to the new couple. (Isaiah 65:11) For example, in some places people throw rice or something similar on the bride and groom. They believe that this will bring the couple children, happiness, and a long life and that it will protect them from evil. But Christians are careful to avoid any customs that are connected to false religion.—**Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.**

**18** A Christian couple want their wedding to be a joyful and dignified occasion and to be enjoyable

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16, 17. What should we think about when planning a wedding?

18. What other Bible principles apply to weddings?

for everyone in attendance. Guests at a Christian wedding would not make speeches that are unkind, sexually suggestive, or disrespectful to the bride and groom or others. (Proverbs 26:18, 19; Luke 6:31; 10:27) A Christian wedding does not emphasize “the showy display of one’s means of life.” (1 John 2:16) If you are planning a wedding, make sure that you will be able to look back on it with happy memories.—See Endnote 28.

### THE ORIGINS OF TOASTING

<sup>19</sup> A common practice at weddings and other social occasions is toasting. During a toast, one person expresses good wishes while others raise their glasses. How should Christians view toasting?

<sup>20</sup> The *International Handbook on Alcohol and Culture* says that toasting probably comes from an ancient pagan custom “in which a sacred liquid was offered to the gods.” This was done “in exchange for a wish, a prayer summarized in the words ‘long life!’ or ‘to your health!’” In ancient times, people used to raise their cups to ask their gods for a blessing. But that is not how Jehovah provides blessings.—John 14:6; 16:23.

### “YOU WHO LOVE JEHOVAH, HATE WHAT IS BAD”

<sup>21</sup> When you are deciding whether or not to participate in any celebration, think about what

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19, 20. What are the origins of toasting?

21. What other kinds of celebrations should Christians avoid?

attitude and behavior it promotes. For example, some celebrations and carnivals involve erotic dancing, uncontrolled drinking, and even immorality. Such celebrations may also promote gay and lesbian lifestyles or encourage nationalism. If we share in these kinds of celebrations, are we really hating what Jehovah hates?—Psalm 1:1, 2; 97:10; 119:37.

**22** Christians need to be very careful to avoid any celebrations that dishonor God. The apostle Paul wrote: “Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God’s glory.” (1 Corinthians 10:31; see Endnote 29.) Of course, not all celebrations are connected with immorality, false religion, or nationalism. If a celebration does not violate Bible principles, we need to make a personal decision about whether we will take part in it. We also want to consider how our decision will affect others.

### **HONOR JEHOVAH BY WHAT YOU SAY AND DO**

**23** You have probably stopped taking part in celebrations that dishonor Jehovah. But some of your family who are not Jehovah’s Witnesses might think that this means you don’t like them or want to be with them anymore. They may feel that holidays are the only time that the family gets together.

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22. What can help a Christian decide if he will take part in a celebration?

23, 24. How can we explain our decision about certain celebrations to non-Witness family members?



So, what can you do? There are many ways you can reassure them that you love them and that they are important to you. (Proverbs 11:25; Ecclesiastes 3:12, 13) You might invite them to spend time with you on other occasions.

**24** If your relatives want to know why certain holidays are no longer acceptable to you, you can look up information in our publications and on [jw.org](http://jw.org) that will help you to explain your reasons to them. Don't give them the impression that you are trying to win an argument or force them to think as you do. Help your family see that you considered many factors and then made a personal decision. Stay calm, and "let your words always be gracious, seasoned with salt."—Colossians 4:6.

**25** It is important that all of us clearly understand our personal reasons for not taking part in certain celebrations. (Hebrews 5:14) Our goal is to please Jehovah. And if we are parents, we must take time to help our children to understand and love Bible principles. When Jehovah becomes real to them, they too will want to please him.—Isaiah 48:17, 18; 1 Peter 3:15.

**26** Jehovah is happy to see us doing all we can to worship him in a clean and honest way. (John 4:23) But many think that a person cannot really be honest in this dishonest world. Is that true? Let's discuss this in the next chapter.

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25, 26. How can parents help their children to love Jehovah's standards?

## 1 EVERYTHING WE DO SHOULD HONOR JEHOVAH

“Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God’s glory.”—1 Corinthians 10:31

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**How can we make good decisions about celebrations?**

**Proverbs 15:15;**  
**Ecclesiastes 3:12, 13;**  
**Acts 20:35;**

**2 Corinthians 9:7**  
Jehovah wants us to enjoy life. He wants us to be kind and generous every day, not only on special occasions.

**Exodus 32:1-6;**  
**Revelation 12:9**

It is not always easy to know what to do. Satan tries to trick us by confusing right and wrong.

**John 8:32;**  
**Hebrews 5:14**

Learn about the origins of popular celebrations to see if they please Jehovah.

## 2 MANY POPULAR CELEBRATIONS HAVE PAGAN ORIGINS

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”—John 8:32

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### What are the origins of some celebrations?

**2 Corinthians 6:14-18;**  
**2 John 6, 7**

After the apostles died, false teachers brought pagan customs and celebrations into the congregation and gave them Christian names. Many of these are still celebrated today, such as Easter and Halloween.

**Luke 2:8-11**

In many parts of the world, Christmas is celebrated on December 25. But that is not when Jesus was born.

**Genesis 40:20-22;**  
**Mark 6:21-29**

Early Christians did not celebrate birthdays. The Bible mentions birthdays only in a negative way.

### 3 MAKE WISE DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT TO CELEBRATE

“Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord.”—Ephesians 5:10

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**What kinds of celebrations should Christians avoid? When making a decision about a certain celebration, ask yourself:**

**Isaiah 52:11;**

**1 Corinthians 4:6;**

**2 Corinthians 6:14-18;**

**Revelation 18:4**

Did it begin as part of false worship, or even demonism?

**Jeremiah 17:5-7;**

**Acts 10:25, 26;**

**1 John 5:21**

Does it honor a human, an organization, or a national symbol?

**Acts 10:34, 35; 17:26**

Does it honor one race or country over another?

**Psalm 97:10;**

**1 Corinthians 2:12;**

**Ephesians 2:2;**

**1 Peter 4:3**

Does it promote “the spirit of the world,” perhaps by encouraging people to get drunk or be immoral?

**Romans 14:21**

If I joined in this celebration, could it affect the conscience of others?

**Romans 12:1, 2;**

**Colossians 4:6;**

**1 Peter 3:15**

If I choose not to join in this celebration, how will I explain my reasons to others?

## BE HONEST IN ALL THINGS

“We wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things.”—HEBREWS 13:18.

AS A boy walks home from school one day, he finds a wallet full of money on the ground. What will he do? He could keep it. But instead, he returns the wallet to its owner. When the boy’s mother hears about what he did, she is very proud of him.

<sup>2</sup> Most parents are happy when their children are honest. Our heavenly Father, Jehovah, is “the God of truth,” and it makes him happy when we are honest. (Psalm 31:5) We want to please him and “conduct ourselves honestly in all things.” (Hebrews 13:18) Let’s discuss four areas of life in which honesty can be a challenge. Then we will consider some of the benefits that will come when we meet that challenge.

### HONESTY WITH OURSELVES

<sup>3</sup> To be honest with others, we must first be honest with ourselves. This is not always easy. In the

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1, 2. How does Jehovah feel when he sees us working hard to be honest?

3-5. (a) How could we be dishonest with ourselves? (b) What will help us to be honest with ourselves?

first century, brothers in the congregation of Laodicea fooled themselves into thinking that they were pleasing God when in reality they were not. (Revelation 3:17) We too could deceive ourselves about the kind of person we really are.

<sup>4</sup> The disciple James explained: "If any man thinks he is a worshipper of God but does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he is deceiving his own heart, and his worship is futile." (James 1:26) We would be deceiving ourselves if we thought that as long as we did some good things, God would not care if we were rude or sarcastic or if we told lies. What can help us to avoid deceiving ourselves?

<sup>5</sup> When we look in a mirror, we can see what we look like on the outside. When we read the Bible, we can see who we are on the inside. The Bible can help us to know both our strengths and our weaknesses. We learn what changes we need to make in the way we think, act, and speak. (**Read James 1:23-25.**) But if we tell ourselves that we do not have any flaws, then we cannot make the necessary improvements. So we need to use the Bible to look at ourselves honestly. (Lamentations 3:40; Haggai 1:5) Prayer also helps us to see ourselves as we really are. We can ask Jehovah in prayer to examine us and help us see our flaws so that we can correct them. (Psalm 139:23, 24) We remember that "Jehovah detests a devious person, but His close friendship is with the upright."—Proverbs 3:32.

## HONESTY IN THE FAMILY

<sup>6</sup> Honesty is absolutely essential in the family. When a husband and a wife are open with each other, they feel secure and can really trust each other. Dishonesty in marriage can take many forms. For example, a married person could become involved in flirting or pornography or could secretly develop a romantic relationship with someone. Notice what the psalmist said: “I do not associate with deceitful men, and I avoid those who hide what they are.” (Psalm 26:4) If you are dishonest with your mate even in your thoughts, it will harm your marriage.

6. Why should a husband and a wife be honest with each other?

Be quick to reject anything that could weaken your marriage



<sup>7</sup> Children also need to learn that honesty is important. Parents can use the Bible to teach them this. It contains bad examples of people who were dishonest: Achan, who became a thief; Gehazi, who lied in order to get money; and Judas, who stole money and later betrayed Jesus for 30 silver coins. —Joshua 6:17-19; 7:11-25; 2 Kings 5:14-16, 20-27; Matthew 26:14, 15; John 12:6.

<sup>8</sup> The Bible also contains many good examples of people who were honest: Jacob, who urged his sons to return the money they had found; Jephthah and his daughter, who kept a promise to God; and Jesus, who was honest even in difficult situations. (Genesis 43:12; Judges 11:30-40; John 18:3-11) These examples can help children to understand the value of honesty.

<sup>9</sup> Parents can learn from this important Bible principle: “Do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself? You, the one preaching, ‘Do not steal,’ do you steal?” (Romans 2:21) Children know when their parents say one thing but do another. If we tell our children to be honest but we are not honest ourselves, they will be confused. If children notice that their parents lie, even about small things, they will probably do the same. (**Read Luke 16:10.**) On the other hand, when children see that their parents are

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7, 8. How can you use the Bible to teach children the value of honesty?

9. How will it help children if their parents are honest?



honest, it may help them to be trustworthy parents when they have children of their own.—Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4.

### HONESTY IN THE CONGREGATION

<sup>10</sup> We also need to be honest with our Christian brothers and sisters. It is easy for everyday conversation to turn into gossip, even slander. If we repeat something without knowing whether it is true, we might be spreading lies. It is far better to ‘control our lips.’ (Proverbs 10:19) Being honest does not mean that we have to say everything we think, know, or have heard. Even if what we are about to say is true, it may be none of our business, or it may be unnecessary and unkind to repeat it. (1 Thessalonians 4:11) Some people make excuses for being rude by saying: “I’m just being honest.” But as Jehovah’s people, we always want our words to be gracious and kind.—**Read Colossians 4:6.**

<sup>11</sup> Jehovah has assigned elders the responsibility of helping the congregation. It is easier for the elders to help us when we are honest with them. Why? If you were sick and you went to a doctor for help, would you hide some of your symptoms from him? If you did that, how could he help you? In a similar way, if we made a serious mistake, we should

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10. How can we be honest in our conversations with fellow Christians?

11, 12. (a) How can a person who has sinned make matters worse by being dishonest about it? (b) What are some questions we might ask? (c) How can we be honest with Jehovah’s organization?

not lie about it. Instead, we should go to the elders and talk honestly about it. (Psalm 12:2; Acts 5:1-11) Now imagine a different situation: What if you found out that your friend had made a serious mistake? (Leviticus 5:1) Would you say: "If I'm really his friend, I will keep it a secret"? Or would you remember that the elders are there to give him the help he needs so that he can repair and strengthen his relationship with Jehovah?—Hebrews 13:17; James 5:14, 15.

<sup>12</sup> We also need to be honest with Jehovah's organization when we fill out reports, such as when we report our activity in the ministry. And we are honest when we apply to pioneer or to do any other form of service.—**Read Proverbs 6:16-19.**

<sup>13</sup> Christian brothers and sisters need to keep business matters separate from worship. For example, we do not do business while we are at the Kingdom Hall or in the ministry. And we don't take advantage of our brothers or sisters in business matters. If you employ Witnesses, pay your workers on time, give them the amount you promised, and provide any benefits required by law. These might include medical insurance or paid time off. (1 Timothy 5:18; James 5:1-4) And if you are employed by a fellow Witness, do not expect special treatment. (Ephesians 6:5-8) Make sure to work the agreed amount of time and to do the work you are paid to do.—2 Thessalonians 3:10.

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13. How can we be honest if we do business with a fellow Christian?

**14** What if we go into business with a brother or a sister? This might involve an investment or a loan. In situations such as these, there is a very useful Bible principle: Put everything in writing! When the prophet Jeremiah bought some land, he wrote two copies of the agreement, had one copy signed by witnesses, and stored both documents for future reference. (Jeremiah 32:9-12; see also Genesis 23:16-20.) Some feel that writing an agreement down could make it seem as if they do not trust their brother. But in reality, writing down the agreement can prevent many misunderstandings, disappointments, and disagreements. Even in business matters, remember that the peace of the congregation is more important than any business deal.—1 Corinthians 6:1-8; see Endnote 30.

### HONESTY IN THE SECULAR WORLD

**15** We must be honest with everyone, including those who are not Jehovah's Witnesses. It is important to Jehovah that we be honest. "Dishonest scales are detestable to Jehovah, but an accurate weight brings pleasure to him." (Proverbs 11:1; 20:10, 23) In Bible times, scales were often used in business transactions. But some merchants cheated their customers by giving them less than they had agreed to or by making them pay more than they should have paid. Today, as in Bible times,

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14. What should Christians do before they go into business together?

15. How does Jehovah feel about dishonest business practices?

dishonesty is very common in business. And just as Jehovah hated dishonesty then, he hates it today.

**16** All of us face situations where we could be dishonest—such as applying for a job, filling out government forms, or taking exams in school. Many believe that there is nothing wrong with lying, exaggerating, or giving misleading answers. This does not surprise us. The Bible foretold that in the last days of this system, people would be “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . without love of goodness.”—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

**17** Sometimes it may seem that dishonest people succeed in today's world. (Psalm 73:1-8) A Christian may even lose his job, be cheated out of money, or get treated badly at work because of his honesty. But honesty is worth any sacrifice. Why?

### THE BLESSINGS OF BEING HONEST

**18** A reputation as an honest, trustworthy, and reliable person is precious and rare in this world. Each of us has the opportunity to build such a reputation. (Micah 7:2) True, some people may make fun of you for being honest and call you foolish. But others will appreciate your honesty and will trust you because of it. All around the world, Jehovah's Witnesses are known for their honesty. Some employers prefer to hire Witnesses because they know that they will be honest. And when other em-

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16, 17. What common forms of dishonesty do we need to avoid?

18. Why is a good reputation so valuable?

ployees have been fired for dishonesty, Witnesses have often kept their jobs.

**19** Being honest in all things will give you a good conscience and peace of mind. We can be like Paul, who wrote: “We trust we have an honest conscience.” (Hebrews 13:18) Most important, your loving Father, Jehovah, will notice and appreciate your efforts to be honest in all things.—**Read Psalm 15:1, 2; Proverbs 22:1.**

19. How will being honest affect your friendship with Jehovah?

We can glorify Jehovah by means of our hard work



## **1** WE LIVE IN A DISHONEST WORLD

“They speak lies to one another . . . and speak with deceitful hearts.”—Psalm 12:2

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### **What can help us to be honest with ourselves?**

**Psalm 31:5;**

**Hebrews 13:18**

Jehovah wants us to be honest with ourselves and others.

**Psalm 139:23, 24;**

**James 1:23-25**

Prayer and Bible reading can help us to see ourselves as we really are and to make changes.

## 2 HONESTY IN THE FAMILY BRINGS PEACE AND UNITY

“I avoid those who hide what they are.”—Psalm 26:4

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### Why is honesty important in the family?

#### **Proverbs 6:16-19**

Honesty within the family builds trust. Family members need to be honest with one another, even when it is difficult.

#### **Proverbs 22:6;**

#### **Ephesians 6:4**

When children see that their parents are honest, it becomes easier for them to be honest.

### 3 HONESTY BENEFITS THE CONGREGATION

“Jehovah detests a devious person, but His close friendship is with the upright.”—Proverbs 3:32

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**Why is it important to be honest with our brothers and sisters in the congregation?**

**Proverbs 10:19;**

**Colossians 4:6**

We always want to speak truth, but our words should be gracious and kind.

**Leviticus 5:1;**

**Hebrews 13:17;**

**James 5:14, 15**

When we are honest with the congregation elders, they can help us.

**Jeremiah 32:9-12;**

**Ephesians 6:5-8**

If we do business with our brothers and sisters, we must be completely honest, treat them fairly, and keep our agreements.



## 4 BEING HONEST ALWAYS BENEFITS US

“A good name is to be chosen rather than great wealth.”—Proverbs 22:1

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**In what other areas of life do we need to be honest?**

**Psalm 37:21;**  
**Matthew 22:17-21;**  
**Romans 13:1-7;**  
**Ephesians 4:25, 28**

We are honest when dealing with our employer, when handling business matters, when taking

school exams, and when filling out forms, such as tax returns or government documents.

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**Why is honesty better than material riches?**

**Psalm 15:1, 2;**  
**Proverbs 11:1;**  
**1 Timothy 6:9, 10**

A reputation as an honest and reliable person is very valuable. Honesty helps us to have a good conscience. Jehovah appreciates every effort we make to be honest.

## ENJOY YOUR WORK

“Everyone should . . . find enjoyment for all his hard work.”—ECCLESIASTES 3:13.

PEOPLE all over the world work hard to support themselves and their families. Many do not like their job, and some even dread going to work each day. If that is how you feel, what can you do to make your job more enjoyable? How can you feel good about your work?

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah tells us: “Everyone should eat and drink and find enjoyment for all his hard work. It is the gift of God.” (Ecclesiastes 3:13) Jehovah created us with the need and desire to work. He wants us to feel good about what we do.—**Read Ecclesiastes 2:24; 5:18.**

<sup>3</sup> So, what can help us to enjoy our work? What types of work should Christians avoid? How can we balance our job with our worship of Jehovah? And what is the most important work we can do?

### THE TWO GREATEST WORKERS

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah himself loves to work. Genesis 1:1 states: “In the beginning God created the heavens

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1-3. (a) How do many people feel about their job? (b) What questions will we consider in this chapter?

4, 5. What is Jehovah’s view of work?

and the earth.” After God finished making the earth and everything on it, he said that his creation was “very good.” (Genesis 1:31) Our Creator was satisfied with what he had made.—1 Timothy 1:11.

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah never stops working. Jesus said: “My Father has kept working until now.” (John 5:17) While we don’t know about all the marvelous things Jehovah has been doing, we do know about some of them. He has been selecting those who will rule with his Son, Jesus Christ, as part of the Kingdom. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Jehovah is also actively guiding and caring for humans. As a result of the worldwide preaching work, millions are coming to know Jehovah and have the hope of living forever on a paradise earth.—John 6:44; Romans 6:23.

<sup>6</sup> Like his Father, Jesus loves to work. Before he came to earth, Jesus was God’s “master worker,” sharing in the creation of all things in heaven and on earth. (Proverbs 8:22-31; Colossians 1:15-17) While on earth, Jesus continued to work hard. As a young man, he learned to be a skilled carpenter, likely building both furniture and houses. Jesus became so good at his work that he was known as “the carpenter.”—Mark 6:3.

<sup>7</sup> Yet, Jesus’ most important work on earth was preaching the good news and teaching people about Jehovah. He had three and a half years to finish his ministry, and he worked hard from early in the morning until late at night. (Luke 21:37, 38;

John 3:2) Jesus walked hundreds of miles on dusty roads, sharing the good news with as many people as possible.—Luke 8:1.

**8** For Jesus, doing God's work was like food. This work gave him energy and strength. There were days that Jesus worked so hard that he did not even take time to eat a meal. (John 4:31-38) He used every opportunity to help others learn about his Father. That is why he could say to Jehovah: "I have glorified you on the earth, having finished the work you have given me to do."—John 17:4.

**9** Clearly, both Jehovah and Jesus work very hard and feel joy and satisfaction in their work. We want to "become imitators of God," and we want to "follow [Jesus'] steps closely." (Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 2:21) That is why we try to work hard and do our best in anything we do.

### HOW SHOULD WE VIEW OUR WORK?

**10** As Jehovah's people, we work hard to support ourselves and our families. We want to feel good about our work, but this can be a challenge. So, what can we do if we don't enjoy our job?

**11 Have a positive attitude.** We may not be able to change where or how much we work, but we can change our attitude. Understanding what Jehovah expects of us can help. For example: Jehovah expects a family head to care for his family's needs to

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8, 9. Why did Jesus enjoy his work?

10, 11. What can help us to have a positive attitude about our job?



Having a positive attitude can make any job more enjoyable



the best of his ability. In fact, the Bible says that one who fails to provide for his family “is worse than a person without faith.” (1 Timothy 5:8) If you are a family head, you work hard to provide for your family. Whether or not you like the kind of work you do, you know that by providing for your family, you are also pleasing Jehovah.

**12 Be hardworking and honest.** This can make it easier for you to enjoy your work. (Proverbs 12:24; 22:29) For one thing, your employer will be able to trust you. Employers value honest employees because they will not steal money, materials, or time. (Ephesians 4:28) Even more important, Jehovah knows when you are hardworking and honest. You can have “an honest conscience” because you know you are pleasing the God you love.—Hebrews 13:18; Colossians 3:22-24.

**13 Recognize that your conduct at work can bring praise to Jehovah.** This gives us another reason to feel good about our work. (Titus 2:9, 10) It could even happen that one of your workmates will want to study the Bible because of your good example.—Read Proverbs 27:11; 1 Peter 2:12.

### WHAT JOB SHOULD I CHOOSE?

**14** The Bible does not contain a list of jobs that a Christian should or should not accept. But it does

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12. How does working hard and being honest benefit us?

13. What else can result from our honesty at work?

14-16. What do we need to consider when choosing a job?

contain principles that can help us make good decisions about work. (Proverbs 2:6) Using Bible principles, we can ask ourselves the following questions.

**15 Will this job require me to do something that Jehovah says is wrong?** We have learned about practices Jehovah hates, such as stealing and lying. (Exodus 20:4; Acts 15:29; Ephesians 4:28; Revelation 21:8) So we are careful to avoid any work that goes against Jehovah's standards.—**Read 1 John 5:3.**

Look for work  
that will not go  
against Jehovah's  
standards



**16 Does this job support or promote a practice that Jehovah condemns?** For example, what if you were offered a job as a receptionist for an abortion clinic? There is nothing wrong with being a receptionist. But you know how Jehovah feels about abortion. So even though you would not personally perform the abortions, would you not feel that from Jehovah's standpoint you shared in the guilt? —Exodus 21:22-24.

**17** By using godly principles, we can be the kind of people described at Hebrews 5:14, "those who through use have their powers of discernment trained to distinguish both right and wrong." Ask yourself: 'If I accepted this job, would others be stumbled? Would this job require me to leave my mate and children and go to another country? How would that affect them?'

### **"MAKE SURE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS"**

**18** It can be difficult to put our worship of Jehovah in first place during these "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) Finding a job and keeping it can be a real challenge. We need to take care of our family, but we know that our worship comes first. We cannot allow material things to become too important in our lives. (1 Timothy 6:9, 10) So how can we "make sure of the more important

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17. What can help us make decisions that please God?

18. Why can it be a challenge to stay focused on our worship?



things” and at the same time provide for our family?—Philippians 1:10.

**19 Trust in Jehovah completely.** (Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.) We know that God knows exactly what we need and that he cares deeply about us. (Psalm 37:25; 1 Peter 5:7) His Word tells us: “Let your way of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things. For [God] has said: ‘I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you.’” (Hebrews 13:5) Jehovah does not want us to worry constantly about providing for our family. Over and over again, he has shown that he can provide for his people’s needs. (Matthew 6:25-32) No matter what our work situation is, we regularly study God’s Word, preach the good news, and attend our Christian meetings.—Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

**20 Keep your eye focused.** (Read Matthew 6:22, 23.) This means keeping your life simple so that you can focus on serving Jehovah. We know that it would be foolish to allow money, a nice lifestyle, or the latest gadgets to become more important to us than our friendship with God. So, what will help us to put first things first? We must try our best not to go into debt. If you are already in debt, make a practical plan to lower it or pay it off. If we are not careful, material things could take up a lot of our time and energy, and we may not take time to

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19. How does trusting in Jehovah help us to be balanced about our work?

20. How can we keep our life simple?

pray, study, or preach. Instead of allowing material things to make our life complicated, we want to learn to be content with basics such as “food and clothing.” (1 Timothy 6:8) And whatever our situation, it is good to examine our circumstances from time to time to see how we can serve Jehovah more fully.

**<sup>21</sup> Have the right priorities.** We need to use our time, energy, and material things wisely. If we are

21. Why do we need to decide what has first place in our life?

Serving Jehovah is the most important work we can do



not careful, less important things, such as education or money, will take up our precious time. Jesus said: “Keep on . . . seeking first the Kingdom.” (Matthew 6:33) The choices we make, our habits, our daily routine, and our goals all reveal what has first place in our hearts.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK WE CAN DO

**22** The most important work we have is serving Jehovah and preaching the good news to others. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Like Jesus, we want to do all we can in this work. Some have moved to serve where there is a greater need for preachers. Others are learning a foreign language so that they can preach to people who speak that language. Talk with those who have done these things, and ask them about it. They will tell you that their lives have become happier and more meaningful.—**Read Proverbs 10:22.**

**23** Today, many of us have to spend long hours at a job or even at several jobs simply to provide for our family’s basic needs. Jehovah knows this, and he appreciates everything we do to care for our family. So let us all continue to imitate Jehovah and Jesus by working hard, no matter what kind of work we do. And may we remember that our most important work is serving Jehovah and preaching the good news of God’s Kingdom. This will bring us true joy.

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22, 23. (a) What is the most important work we can have as Christians? (b) What will help us to enjoy our work?

## 1 JEHOVAH CREATED HUMANS WITH THE DESIRE TO WORK

“Everyone should eat and drink and find enjoyment for all his hard work. It is the gift of God.”—Ecclesiastes 3:13

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### Why is work a gift from God?

**Genesis 1:1, 31;**  
**Ecclesiastes 2:24;**  
**John 5:17**

Jehovah works hard. He enjoys his work and wants us to feel good about our work too.

**Proverbs 8:22-31;**  
**Colossians 1:15-17**

Jesus too has always been a hard worker, both in heaven and on earth.

**Mark 6:3;**  
**Luke 21:37, 38;**  
**John 4:31-38; 17:4**

Jesus did high-quality work and completed his assignments even when doing so was not easy.

## 2 WE CAN IMPROVE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR WORK

“Have you seen a man skillful at his work? He will stand before kings.”—Proverbs 22:29

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### What will help us to enjoy our work?

**Proverbs 12:24;**

**Colossians 3:22-24;**

**Hebrews 13:18**

Even if we can't change our job, we can improve our attitude. We also want to be honest and work hard.

**Proverbs 27:11;**

**1 Timothy 5:8;**

**1 Peter 2:12**

When you take care of your family materially, you are obeying God. And your good conduct at work honors Jehovah.

**Exodus 20:13-15;**

**Proverbs 2:6;**

**Romans 14:19-22;**

**Ephesians 5:28–6:4;**

**1 John 5:3;**

**Revelation 18:4**

The Bible helps us to understand how taking a certain job may affect us, our family, other brothers and sisters, and most important, Jehovah.

### 3 SETTING THE RIGHT PRIORITIES CAN HELP US ENJOY OUR WORK

“Make sure of the more important things.”—Philippians 1:10

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#### What should our priorities be?

**Psalm 37:25;**

**Proverbs 3:5, 6;**

**1 Peter 5:7**

Trust that Jehovah knows what you need in your daily life.

**Matthew 6:25-32;**

**1 Timothy 6:8-10;**

**Hebrews 13:5**

Learn to be content with what you already have.

**Proverbs 10:22;**

**Matthew 6:33; 28:19, 20;**

**Hebrews 10:24, 25**

Stay focused on serving Jehovah and preaching the good news. This is the most important work we can do.

## OPPOSE THE DEVIL

“Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you.”

—JAMES 4:7.

LIFE in Jehovah’s new world will be wonderful. Finally, we will live as God intended for us to live. But right now we live in a world controlled by Satan and his demons. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Even though we cannot see them, they exist and they are very powerful.

<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, we will discuss how we can stay close to Jehovah and protect ourselves from Satan. Jehovah promises that he will help us. But we need to understand the methods Satan and the demons use to trick and attack us.

### “LIKE A ROARING LION”

<sup>3</sup> Satan claims that humans worship Jehovah for selfish reasons and that we will stop serving Him if things become too difficult. (Read Job 2:4, 5.) When someone shows that he wants to learn about Jehovah, Satan and the demons notice, and they try to stop him. They are angry when a person dedicates himself to Jehovah and gets baptized. The

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1, 2. What do we need to understand about Satan and the demons?

3. What does the Devil want to do to us?

Bible compares the Devil to “a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.” (1 Peter 5:8) Satan wants to destroy our relationship with Jehovah.—Psalm 7:1, 2; 2 Timothy 3:12.

<sup>4</sup> But we do not need to be afraid of Satan and his demons. Jehovah has limited what they can do to us. Jehovah promises that “a great crowd” of true Christians will survive “the great tribulation.” (Rev-

4, 5. (a) What is Satan unable to do? (b) What does it mean to “oppose the Devil”?

**Satan is angry when we dedicate ourselves to Jehovah**





elation 7:9, 14) There is nothing the Devil can do to stop that from happening, because Jehovah is protecting His people.

<sup>5</sup> If we stay close to Jehovah, Satan cannot break our relationship with Him. God's Word assures us: "Jehovah is with you as long as you remain with him." (2 Chronicles 15:2; **read 1 Corinthians 10:13.**) Many faithful men and women of old, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Sarah, and Moses, opposed the Devil by staying close to Jehovah. (Hebrews 11:4-40) We can do the same. God's Word promises: "Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you." —James 4:7.

### **"WE HAVE A STRUGGLE"**

<sup>6</sup> Even though Satan knows that Jehovah has restricted what he can do to us, he will still try anything to weaken our relationship with God. Today, the Devil attacks in many different ways, and he uses strategies he has used for thousands of years. What are some of these?

<sup>7</sup> The apostle John wrote: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) Satan has this wicked world under his control and would like to control Jehovah's people too. (Micah 4:1; John 15:19; Revelation 12:12, 17) The Devil knows that he does not have much time left, so he is putting intense pressure on each one of us to be disloyal to God. Sometimes the Devil uses

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6. How does Satan attack us?

7. Why is Satan attacking Jehovah's people?

direct attacks, but at other times his attacks are more subtle.

**8** We read at Ephesians 6:12: “We have a struggle [“wrestling,” footnote] . . . against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places.” Each Christian personally has a fight against the Devil and the demons. We need to realize that all those who make a dedication to Jehovah are in this battle. In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul urged Christians three times to “stand firm.”—Ephesians 6:11, 13, 14.

**9** Satan and the demons try to deceive us in various ways. Just because we have resisted Satan in one way does not mean we cannot be overcome by him in another. The Devil tries to find our weaknesses so that he can choose traps to catch us. But we do not have to be caught, because the Bible teaches us about the Devil's traps. (2 Corinthians 2:11; see Endnote 31.) One of these is demonism.

### STAY FAR AWAY FROM THE DEMONS

**10** Demonism involves supernatural things that bring a person into contact with the demons, things such as fortune-telling, witchcraft, casting spells, or trying to speak with the dead. The Bible tells us that demonism is “detestable” and that we cannot be involved with demonism and at the same time worship Jehovah. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12;

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8. What does each Christian need to realize?

9. What do Satan and the demons try to do to us?

10. (a) What is demonism? (b) How does Jehovah view demonism?

Revelation 21:8) Christians must completely avoid all forms of demonism.—Romans 12:9.

<sup>11</sup> Satan knows that if we are attracted to the supernatural, it will be easy for him to draw us into demonism. Any form of demonism would destroy our relationship with Jehovah.

### SATAN TRIES TO TRICK US

<sup>12</sup> Satan tries to confuse the thinking of people. He gradually creates doubts, until people think that “good is bad and bad is good.” (Isaiah 5:20) The Devil promotes the idea that the Bible’s counsel does not work and that we would be happier if we ignored God’s standards.

<sup>13</sup> Spreading doubt is one of Satan’s most effective methods. He has been using it for a long time. In the garden of Eden, he tried to create doubts when he asked Eve: “**Did God really say** that you must not eat from every tree of the garden?” (Genesis 3:1) Later, in Job’s time, Satan asked Jehovah in front of the angels: “**Is it for nothing** that Job has feared God?” (Job 1:9) After Jesus’ baptism, Satan challenged him by saying: “**If you are** a son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.”—Matthew 4:3.

<sup>14</sup> Today, the Devil continues to create doubts. He tries to make people question whether demonism is

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11. Where could curiosity about the supernatural lead us?

12. How would Satan like to influence our thinking?

13. How has Satan tried to create doubts?

14. How could Satan make people doubt that demonism is dangerous?

really that bad by making certain forms of it appear innocent. Even some Christians have become blind to its dangers. (2 Corinthians 11:3) So, what can we do to protect ourselves? How can we make sure that we are not being deceived by Satan's tricks? Let's examine two areas in which we could be tricked: entertainment and medical treatment.

### **SATAN USES OUR NATURAL DESIRES AGAINST US**

**15** Today, many movies, videos, television shows, computer games, and Internet sites feature demons, magic, and supernatural powers. Many see these things as harmless fun and do not realize the danger of letting demons into their lives. A person could also become involved in demonism through things such as horoscopes, palm reading, tarot cards, and crystal balls. The Devil hides the danger and tries to make such things seem mysterious, fascinating, and fun. A person could even think that there's no harm in watching something demonic or supernatural as long as he doesn't actually practice demonism. Why is this thinking dangerous?—1 Corinthians 10:12.

**16** Satan and the demons cannot read our thoughts. But they can learn what we desire and how we think by observing the choices we make for ourselves and our family, including our choice of

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15. How could we get involved with demons through our entertainment?

16. Why should we reject entertainment that features the supernatural?

entertainment. If we chose movies, music, or books about spirit mediums, magic spells, demon possession, witches, vampires, or similar subjects, Satan and the demons would know that we are curious about them. They could then try to involve us even more deeply in demonism.—**Read Galatians 6:7.**

<sup>17</sup> Satan can also take advantage of our desire to be healthy. Today, many suffer from bad health. A person might have tried different treatments without success. (Mark 5:25, 26) He might even

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17. How can Satan take advantage of our desire to be healthy?

Rely on Jehovah when you are sick



become desperate and be willing to try anything. But as Christians, we need to be careful not to choose medical treatments that involve the use of “magical power.”—Isaiah 1:13.

**18** In ancient Israel, there were some who did use “magical power.” Jehovah said to them: “When you spread out your palms, I hide my eyes from you. Although you offer many prayers, I am not listening.” (Isaiah 1:15) Just think—Jehovah would not even listen to their prayers! We do not want to do anything that could damage our relationship with Jehovah and keep him from helping us, especially when we are sick. (Psalm 41:3) So we must find out if a treatment we are considering is connected in any way with demonism or supernatural power. (Matthew 6:13) If there is a possibility that it is connected, we need to avoid it!—See Endnote 32.

### STORIES ABOUT DEMONS

**19** While some people think that the Devil and the demons are imaginary, others know that they are real because of personal experience. Many people live in terror of wicked spirits and are slaves to superstitious customs. Others spread fear of the demons by telling stories of their doing terrible things to humans. Often, people are fascinated by these stories and are excited to tell them to others. Those stories often make people afraid of the Devil.

**20** Think about this—Satan wants people to be

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18. What medical treatments would a Christian avoid?

19. How has the Devil made many people afraid?

20. How could we spread Satan's lies?

afraid of him. (2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10) He is a liar who knows how to influence the minds of those who are drawn toward demonism and make them believe things that are not necessarily true. Those people may tell stories of what they think they have seen and heard. The more that people repeat such stories, the more the stories become exaggerated. We do not want to help Satan spread fear by repeating such stories.—John 8:44; 2 Timothy 2:16.

<sup>21</sup> If one of Jehovah's people had an experience with the demons, he would not repeat the story to entertain others. Jehovah's people do not need to be frightened of anything the Devil and his demons can do. Instead, we need to focus on Jesus and the power Jehovah has given him. (Hebrews 12:2) Jesus did not entertain his disciples with stories about the demons. He focused on the Kingdom message and "the magnificent things of God."—Acts 2:11; Luke 8:1; Romans 1:11, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Let's not forget that Satan's goal is to destroy our relationship with Jehovah. He will try anything to make that happen. But we are aware of the Devil's methods and are determined to resist all forms of demonism. We will "not give the Devil an opportunity" to weaken our determination. (**Read Ephesians 4:27.**) Yes, if we oppose the Devil, we will be safe from his traps and secure in Jehovah's protection.—Ephesians 6:11.

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21. Instead of telling stories about the demons, what can we talk about?

22. What are you determined to do?

## 1 THE WORLD IS CONTROLLED BY THE DEVIL

“The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.”—1 John 5:19

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### What is Satan's goal?

#### **1 Peter 5:8**

Satan wants to harm and even destroy our relationship with Jehovah.

#### **Job 2:4, 5**

He is angry when he sees people come to know and love Jehovah.



## 2 DO NOT BE AFRAID OF SATAN

“Subject yourselves to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you.”—James 4:7

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### How do we know that we can oppose the Devil?

#### **Revelation 7:9, 14**

Jehovah restricts what the Devil can do to us. God has promised that a great crowd will survive into the new world.

#### **2 Chronicles 15:2**

When we stay close to Jehovah, Satan cannot destroy our relationship with Him.

#### **1 Corinthians 10:13;**

#### **Hebrews 11:4-40**

Jehovah promises to help us remain faithful, as he helped many in the past.

### 3 BEWARE OF SATAN'S TRICKS

“We are not ignorant of his designs.”

—2 Corinthians 2:11

#### What kind of tricks does the Devil use?

**John 15:19;**

**Revelation 12:12, 17**

The Devil controls the world, but he does not control Jehovah's people, so he makes them his targets.

**Genesis 3:1;**

**Galatians 5:19-21;**

**Ephesians 6:12**

The Devil tries to find our weaknesses so that he can use them against us.

**Leviticus 19:26;**

**Isaiah 1:13, 15;**

**Mark 5:25, 26**

Be careful when choosing medical treatments. A person may be so desperate to get well that he is willing to try a treatment that uses supernatural power.

**Deuteronomy 18:10-12;**

**Acts 19:19;**

**Galatians 6:7;**

**Revelation 21:8**

If the demons see that we are curious about supernatural things, they can take advantage of our curiosity. If we got involved in demonism, we would be disloyal to Jehovah.

## 4 DO NOT SPREAD THE DEVIL'S LIES

“The Devil . . . is a liar and the father of the lie.”—John 8:44

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### How might we spread the Devil's lies?

**Romans 1:11, 12;**

**2 Timothy 2:16**

People tell stories that make the Devil and the demons seem more powerful than they really are. But rather than repeating stories that spread fear, we should focus on encouraging one another.

**Ephesians 6:11**

When we are aware of the Devil's tricks, we can resist him and stay close to Jehovah.

## REMAIN IN GOD'S LOVE

“Build yourselves up on your most holy faith . . .  
Keep yourselves in God’s love.”—JUDE 20, 21.

WE ALL want to be strong and healthy. So we try to eat good food, exercise regularly, and take care of our body. Although this takes effort, we enjoy the results, so we don’t give up. But we also need to be strong and healthy in another way.

<sup>2</sup> Even though we have made a good start in getting to know Jehovah, we need to keep making our relationship with him stronger. When Jude encouraged Christians, “Keep yourselves in God’s love,” he explained how they could do this. He told them: “Build yourselves up on your most holy faith.” (Jude 20, 21) So how can we build strong faith?

### KEEP BUILDING YOUR FAITH

<sup>3</sup> It is important for you to be personally convinced that Jehovah’s ways are best. Satan wants you to think that God’s standards are too difficult to live up to and that you will be happier if you decide for yourself what is right and what is wrong. Ever since

1, 2. What can we do to remain in God’s love?

3-5. (a) How would Satan like you to feel about Jehovah’s standards? (b) How do you feel about Jehovah’s laws and principles?

the garden of Eden, Satan has tried to make people believe this. (Genesis 3:1-6) And he is still trying hard today.

<sup>4</sup> Is Satan right? Are Jehovah's standards too restrictive? No. To illustrate, imagine you are walking in a beautiful park. You notice a high fence blocking off a certain area. Maybe you think, 'Why is this fence in my way?' But at that moment, you hear a lion roar on the other side of the fence. How do you feel about the fence now? You are grateful that it is protecting you from being the lion's next meal! Jehovah's principles are like that fence, and the Devil is like that lion. God's Word warns us: "Keep your senses, be watchful! Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone."—1 Peter 5:8.

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah wants us to have the best life possible. He does not want us to be deceived by Satan. That is why he has given us laws and principles to protect us and make us happy. (Ephesians 6:11) James wrote: "The one who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and continues in it . . . will be happy in what he does."—James 1:25.

<sup>6</sup> When we follow Jehovah's direction, our lives improve and our friendship with him grows stronger. For example, we benefit when we accept his invitation to pray to him often. (Matthew 6:5-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17) We are happy when we obey

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6. How can we become convinced that God's ways are best?

his direction to meet together to worship him and encourage one another and when we have a full share in the preaching and teaching work. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 10:24, 25) As we think about how these things have helped us to keep our faith strong, we become more and more convinced that Jehovah's ways are best.

<sup>7</sup> We may worry that in the future we will have tests of faith that will be too difficult for us. If you ever feel that way, remember Jehovah's words: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One guiding you in the way you

7, 8. What will help us avoid worrying about tests that may come in the future?



should walk. If only you would pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.”—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

<sup>8</sup> When we obey Jehovah, our peace will be like a river that does not run dry, and our righteousness will be like waves of the sea that constantly wash onto a beach. No matter what happens in our lives, we can be faithful. The Bible promises: “Throw your burden on Jehovah, and he will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to fall.”—Psalm 55:22.

### “PRESS ON TO MATURITY”

<sup>9</sup> As you strengthen your relationship with Jehovah, you will “press on to maturity.” (Hebrews 6:1) What does it mean to be mature?

<sup>10</sup> We do not become mature Christians simply by getting older. To become mature, we must make Jehovah our best Friend and try to view things as he does. (John 4:23) Paul wrote: “Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit, on the things of the spirit.” (Romans 8:5) A mature person does not focus his life on pleasure or material things. Instead, he focuses on serving Jehovah and makes wise choices in life. (Proverbs 27:11; **read James 1:2, 3.**) He does not let himself be influenced to do wrong. A mature person knows what is right and is determined to do it.

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9, 10. What does it mean to be mature?

<sup>11</sup> It takes effort to become mature. The apostle Paul wrote: “Solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their powers of discernment trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Hebrews 5:14) The word “trained” may make us think of the training of an athlete.

<sup>12</sup> When we see a skilled athlete in action, we know that it took time and training for him to develop his skill. He was not born an athlete. When a baby is born, he does not know exactly how to use his arms and legs. But in time, he learns how to hold objects and how to walk. With training, he can become an athlete. In a similar way, it takes time and training for us to become mature Christians.

<sup>13</sup> In this publication, we've examined how we can think the way Jehovah thinks and view things as he does. We have learned to appreciate and love Jehovah's standards. When we make decisions, we ask ourselves: ‘What laws or principles from the Bible apply to this situation? How can I apply them? What would Jehovah like me to do?’—**Read Proverbs 3: 5, 6; James 1:5.**

<sup>14</sup> We never stop building our faith in Jehovah. Just as eating nutritious food helps us to build strong bodies, learning about Jehovah helps us to build strong faith. When we began studying the Bible, we

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11, 12. (a) What did Paul say about a Christian's “powers of discernment”? (b) How is becoming a mature Christian similar to becoming an athlete?

13. What will help us to learn to think the way Jehovah thinks?

14. What do we need to do if we are to build our faith?



learned basic truths about Jehovah and his ways. But as time goes by, we need to understand deeper things. That is what Paul meant when he said: "Solid food belongs to mature people." By applying the things we learn, we gain wisdom. The Bible tells us: "Wisdom is the most important thing."—Proverbs 4:5-7; 1 Peter 2:2.

**15** A person may be strong and healthy, but to stay that way, he knows that he must continue to take good care of himself. In a similar way, a mature person knows that he needs to work hard to keep his relationship with Jehovah strong. Paul reminds us: "Keep testing whether you are in the faith; keep proving what you yourselves are." (2 Corinthians 13:5) Still, we need more than just strong faith. Our love for Jehovah and our brothers and sisters must continue to grow. Paul said: "If I have . . . knowledge, and if I have all the faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."—1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

### FOCUS ON YOUR HOPE

**16** Satan wants us to think that we can never be good enough to please Jehovah. He would like us to feel discouraged and to think that there is no solution to our problems. He does not want us to trust our fellow Christians, and he does not want us to be happy. (Ephesians 2:2) Satan knows that negative thinking

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15. How important is it that we truly love Jehovah and our brothers and sisters?

16. How would Satan like us to feel?



can harm both us and our relationship with God. But Jehovah has given us something to help us fight negative thinking. He has given us hope.

**17** At 1 Thessalonians 5:8, the Bible compares our hope to the helmet that protects a soldier's head in battle, calling that helmet "the hope of salvation." Hope in Jehovah's promises can protect our mind and help us resist negative thoughts.

**18** Jesus' hope made him strong. On the final night of his life on earth, he dealt with one difficult situation after another. A close friend betrayed him. Another denied even knowing him. Others abandoned him and fled. His own countrymen rose up against him, demanding his death by torture. What helped

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17. How important is hope?

18, 19. How was Jesus strengthened by hope?



him to endure these painful things? “For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”—Hebrews 12:2.

**19** Jesus knew that by being faithful, he would bring glory to his Father and prove Satan a liar. This hope brought him great joy. He also knew that soon he would be reunited with his Father in heaven. This hope helped him to endure. Like Jesus, we must focus on our hope. It will help us to endure no matter what happens.

**20** Jehovah sees your faith and endurance. (Isaiah 30:18; read **Malachi 3:10**.) He promises to “grant you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4) So keep

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20. What can help you to be positive?

your mind focused on your hope. Satan wants you to lose hope and to feel that Jehovah's promises will never come true. But you cannot give in to negative thinking! If you notice that your hope is becoming less real to you, ask Jehovah for help. Remember the words found at Philippians 4:6, 7: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."

**21** Regularly take time to meditate on the exciting future ahead. Soon, everyone alive will worship Jehovah. (Revelation 7:9, 14) Just think about life in the new world. It will be better than anything we can imagine! Satan, his demons, and all wickedness will be gone. You will not get sick, and you will not die. Instead, you will wake up each day full of energy and happy to be alive. Everyone will work together to make the earth into a paradise. All will have good food and a safe place to live. People will not be cruel or violent but will be genuinely kind to one another. In time, all humans on earth will enjoy "the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Romans 8:21.

**22** Jehovah wants you to make him your best Friend. So do all you can to obey Jehovah and to draw closer to him each day. Yes, may all of us remain in God's love forever!—Jude 21.

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21, 22. (a) What is Jehovah's purpose for the earth? (b) What are you resolved to do?

## **1** KEEP MAKING YOUR FAITH STRONGER

“Build yourselves up on your most holy faith.”—Jude 20

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### What can help us to build our faith?

**Ephesians 6:11;**

**James 1:25;**

**1 Peter 5:8**

Think about how obedience to Jehovah protects us and helps us to have a better life.

**Matthew 28:19, 20;**

**1 Thessalonians 5:17;**

**Hebrews 10:24, 25**

To strengthen our faith, we must regularly pray, talk to others about Jehovah, and associate with our brothers and sisters.

**Psalm 55:22;**

**Isaiah 48:17, 18**

Jehovah will never abandon you. When you follow his guidance, you will have peace.

## 2 WE WANT TO BECOME MATURE CHRISTIANS

“Let us press on to maturity.”—Hebrews 6:1

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### What does it mean to be a mature Christian?

**Romans 8:5;**

**Hebrews 5:14**

It takes time and effort to become mature. A mature Christian tries to look at things from Jehovah’s point of view and makes wise decisions.

**Proverbs 27:11;**

**James 1:2, 3**

Challenges are opportunities to strengthen your faith and prove your love for Jehovah.

**Proverbs 3:5, 6;**

**James 1:5**

When making decisions, meditate on what Jehovah would want you to do and ask him to help you.

**2 Corinthians 13:5**

Never stop learning about Jehovah and strengthening your relationship with him.

### 3 KEEP FOCUSED ON YOUR HOPE

“Put on . . . the hope of salvation as a helmet.”—1 Thessalonians 5:8

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#### How can hope protect us?

##### **Hebrews 12:2**

Your hope for the future is very powerful. Think of how Jesus' hope helped him endure his trials.

##### **Philippians 4:6, 7**

If you ever feel that your hope is fading, pray about it. Negative thinking and doubts will weaken you. But Jehovah will give you courage and peace of mind.

##### **Malachi 3:10;**

##### **Romans 8:21**

Regularly meditate on your hope for the future. The new world will be better than anything you can imagine.

##### **Psalms 37:4;**

##### **Jude 21**

Jehovah wants you to come to know him as your best Friend. Do everything you can to obey him, and draw closer to him each day.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Principles	19	Atonement
2	Obedience	20	Respect for Animals
3	Free Will	21	Blood Fractions and Medical Procedures
4	Moral Standards	22	Moral Cleanness
5	Conscience	23	Brazen Conduct and Uncleanness
6	Fear of God	24	Masturbation
7	Repentance	25	Polygamy
8	Disfellowshipping	26	Divorce and Separation
9	Guidance, Direction, and Counsel	27	Commendation and Encouragement
10	Pride and Humility	28	Weddings
11	Authority	29	Making Wise Decisions
12	Elders	30	Business and Legal Matters
13	Family Head	31	Satan's Deceptions
14	Governing Body	32	Medical Treatment
15	Head Covering		
16	Neutrality		
17	Spirit of the World		
18	Apostasy		



## 1 PRINCIPLES

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God's laws are based on his principles. These principles are basic truths that we find in the Bible. They help us to understand how God thinks and feels about matters. Principles help us to make good decisions in life and to do what is right. They are especially helpful in situations that are not specifically covered by God's laws.

► Chapter 1, paragraph 8

## 2 OBEDIENCE

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Obedience to Jehovah means that we willingly do what he tells us to do. Jehovah wants us to obey him because we love him. (1 John 5:3) If we love and trust God, we will follow his advice in all situations. We will obey him even when it is difficult for us. It is good for us to obey Jehovah, because he teaches us how to have a good life now and promises us that we will enjoy many blessings in the future.—Isaiah 48:17.

► Chapter 1, paragraph 10

## 3 FREE WILL

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Jehovah has given each person free will, or the ability to make choices. He did not create us to be like robots. (Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15) We can use our freedom to make good choices. But if we are not careful, we could make unwise decisions. Having free will means that we must personally decide whether we want to be loyal to Jehovah and prove that we really love him.

► Chapter 1, paragraph 12

## 4 MORAL STANDARDS

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Jehovah sets moral standards, or guidelines for our conduct and actions. In the Bible, we can learn what these standards are and how they can help us to live a good life. (Proverbs 6:16-19; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) These guidelines help us to know what God views as

right or wrong. They also help us to know how to be loving, how to make good decisions, and how to be kind to others. Although the world's standards continue to get lower, Jehovah's standards do not change. (Deuteronomy 32:4-6; Malachi 3:6) Following them protects us from much physical and emotional harm.

▶ Chapter 1, paragraph 17

## 5 CONSCIENCE

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Our conscience is our inner sense of right and wrong. Jehovah has given each of us a conscience. (Romans 2:14, 15) For our conscience to work correctly, we must train it according to Jehovah's moral standards. Then our conscience can help us make decisions that please God. (1 Peter 3:16) Our conscience can warn us when we are about to make a foolish choice, or it can make us feel deep pain after we have done something wrong. Our conscience can become weak, but with Jehovah's help, we can make it strong again. A good conscience gives us peace of mind and self-respect.

▶ Chapter 2, paragraph 3

## 6 FEAR OF GOD

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To fear God means that we love and respect him so much that we do not want to do anything that will displease him. Fear of God helps us to do what is good and to avoid doing what is bad. (Psalm 111:10) It moves us to listen carefully to everything Jehovah says. It also helps us to keep our promises to him because we deeply respect him. Fear of God affects the way we think, the way we treat others, and the choices we make every day.

▶ Chapter 2, paragraph 9

## 7 REPENTANCE

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Repentance includes the deep sorrow someone feels because he has done something wrong. Those who love God feel very sorry

when they realize they have done something that goes against his standards. If we do something wrong, we should beg Jehovah to forgive us on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (Matthew 26:28; 1 John 2:1, 2) When we sincerely repent and stop doing what is bad, we can have confidence that Jehovah will forgive us. We no longer need to feel guilty about what we have done in the past. (Psalm 103:10-14; 1 John 1:9; 3:19-22) We must work hard to learn from our mistakes, change any wrong thinking, and live according to Jehovah's standards.

► Chapter 2, paragraph 18

## 8 DISFELLOWSHIPPING

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When someone who has seriously sinned does not repent and refuses to follow Jehovah's standards, he can no longer be a member of the congregation. He needs to be disfellowshipped. When someone is disfellowshipped, we have no more dealings with that person and we stop talking to him. (1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 John 9-11) The disfellowshipping arrangement protects Jehovah's name and the congregation. (1 Corinthians 5:6) Disfellowshipping is also discipline that can help someone to repent so that he can return to Jehovah.—Luke 15:17.

► Chapter 3, paragraph 19

## 9 GUIDANCE, DIRECTION, AND COUNSEL

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Jehovah loves us and wants to help us. That is why he gives us guidance, direction, and counsel by means of the Bible and through people who love God. As imperfect humans, we desperately need this help. (Jeremiah 17:9) When we respectfully listen to those Jehovah uses to guide us, we show that we respect him and want to obey him.—Hebrews 13:7.

► Chapter 4, paragraph 2

## 10 PRIDE AND HUMILITY

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Since we are imperfect, it is easy for us to be selfish and proud. But Jehovah expects us to be humble. Often, we begin to learn humility when we compare ourselves to Jehovah and realize how small we are. (Job 38:1-4) Another important part of humility is learning to think more about others and what will be good for them rather than ourselves. Pride often makes a person believe that he is better than others. A humble person looks at himself honestly and sees both his strengths and his weaknesses. He is not afraid to admit his mistakes, to apologize, and to accept suggestions and counsel. A humble person relies on Jehovah and follows his direction.—1 Peter 5:5.

► Chapter 4, paragraph 4

## 11 AUTHORITY

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Authority is the right to give orders and make decisions. Jehovah is the one with the highest authority in heaven and on earth. Because he created all things, he is the most powerful Person in the universe. He always uses his authority to benefit others. Jehovah has given some humans the responsibility to look after us. For example, parents, congregation elders, and governments have some authority, and Jehovah wants us to cooperate with them. (Romans 13:1-5; 1 Timothy 5:17) But when man's laws conflict with God's laws, we obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29) When we accept the authority of those Jehovah is using, we show Jehovah that we respect his decisions.

► Chapter 4, paragraph 7

## 12 ELDERS

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Jehovah uses elders, who are experienced brothers, to care for the congregation. (Deuteronomy 1:13; Acts 20:28) These men help us to keep our relationship with Jehovah strong and to worship him in a peaceful and organized way. (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40) For elders

to be appointed by holy spirit, they must meet specific qualifications found in the Bible. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5: 2, 3) We trust and support God's organization, so we happily cooperate with the elders.—Psalm 138:6; Hebrews 13:17.

► Chapter 4, paragraph 8

## 13 FAMILY HEAD

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Jehovah has given parents the responsibility of looking after their children and household. However, the Bible explains that the husband is the head of the family. If there is no father in the household, the mother becomes the family head. The responsibilities of the family head include providing the family with food, clothing, and a place to live. It is very important for the family head to take the lead in helping the family to worship Jehovah. For example, he makes sure that they regularly attend congregation meetings, share in the field ministry, and study the Bible together. The family head also takes the lead in making decisions. He always tries to imitate Jesus by being kind and reasonable, never cruel or harsh. This helps to create a loving atmosphere, so that all in the family can feel safe and grow in their relationship with Jehovah.

► Chapter 4, paragraph 12

## 14 GOVERNING BODY

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The Governing Body is the group of men with the heavenly hope who are used by God to direct the work of his people. In the first century, Jehovah used a governing body to guide the early Christian congregation in their worship and their preaching work. (Acts 15:2) Today, the group of brothers who serve as the Governing Body take the lead in directing, guiding, and protecting God's people. When these brothers make decisions, they rely on guidance from God's Word and his holy spirit. Jesus spoke of this group of anointed men as "the faithful and discreet slave."—Matthew 24:45-47.

► Chapter 4, paragraph 15

## 15 HEAD COVERING

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There may be times when a sister is asked to do something in the congregation that is normally done by a brother. When she does this work, she shows her respect for Jehovah's arrangement by wearing a head covering. But the need to cover her head applies only in certain situations. For example, a sister would wear something to cover her head if she conducts a Bible study when her husband or a baptized brother is present.—1 Corinthians 11:11-15.

▶ Chapter 4, paragraph 17

## 16 NEUTRALITY

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When we are neutral, we refuse to take sides in political matters. (John 17:16) Jehovah's people support his Kingdom. We are neutral in the affairs of the world, just as Jesus was.

Jehovah commands us "to be obedient to governments and authorities." (Titus 3:1, 2; Romans 13:1-7) But God's law also says that we should not murder. So a Christian's conscience would not allow him to go to war. If a Christian has the option of doing civilian work as an alternative to military service, he must consider whether his conscience allows him to do so.

We worship only Jehovah, because he is our Creator. Although we show respect for national symbols, we would not salute a flag or sing a national anthem. (Isaiah 43:11; Daniel 3:1-30; 1 Corinthians 10:14) Also, Jehovah's people make a personal decision not to vote for any political party or candidate. This is because we have already taken the side of God's government.—Matthew 22:21; John 15:19; 18:36.

▶ Chapter 5, paragraph 2

## 17 SPIRIT OF THE WORLD

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The world promotes Satan's way of thinking. This way of thinking is common among people who do not love and imitate Jehovah

and who ignore his standards. (1 John 5:19) Such thinking and the actions that it leads to is described as the spirit of the world. (Ephesians 2:2) Jehovah's people make sure that they are not overcome by this spirit. (Ephesians 6:10-18) Instead, we love Jehovah's ways and work hard to hold on to his way of thinking.

► Chapter 5, paragraph 7

## 18 APOSTASY

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Apostasy is taking a stand against the truth of the Bible. Apostates rebel against Jehovah and against Jesus, the appointed King of God's Kingdom, and try to influence others to join them. (Romans 1:25) They want to create doubts in the minds of those who worship Jehovah. Some people in the early Christian congregation became apostates, and so have some in our day. (2 Thessalonians 2:3) Those who are loyal to Jehovah have nothing to do with apostates. We would never allow curiosity or pressure from others to cause us to read or listen to apostate ideas. We are loyal to Jehovah and worship only him.

► Chapter 5, paragraph 9

## 19 ATONEMENT

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Under the Law of Moses, the nation of Israel asked Jehovah to forgive their sins. They brought atonement sacrifices of grain, oil, and animals to the temple. In this way, the Israelites were reminded that Jehovah was willing to forgive their sins, both as a nation and as individuals. Later, after Jesus gave his life to cover our sins, these atonement sacrifices were no longer necessary. Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice "once for all time."—Hebrews 10:1, 4, 10.

► Chapter 7, paragraph 6

## 20 RESPECT FOR ANIMALS

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Under the Law of Moses, people were allowed to use animals for food. They were also commanded to present animal sacrifices.

(Leviticus 1:5, 6) But Jehovah never permitted his people to be cruel to animals. (Proverbs 12:10) In fact, the Law contained rules that protected animals from cruelty. The Israelites were commanded to look after their animals properly.—Deuteronomy 22:6, 7.

► Chapter 7, paragraph 6

## 21 BLOOD FRACTIONS AND MEDICAL PROCEDURES

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**Blood fractions.** Blood is made up of four main parts—red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma. These four main parts of blood may be broken down into smaller parts, called blood fractions.\*

Christians refuse transfusions of whole blood or of any of its four main parts. But should they accept blood fractions? The Bible does not provide specific details. So each Christian must make his own decision based on his Bible-trained conscience.

Some Christians choose to refuse all blood fractions. They may reason that God's Law to Israel required that any blood removed from an animal be poured "out on the ground."—Deuteronomy 12:22-24.

Others make a different choice. Their conscience allows them to accept some blood fractions. They may reason that small fractions no longer represent the life of the creature from which the blood was taken.

When making decisions about blood fractions, consider the following questions:

- Am I aware that refusing all blood fractions means that I will not accept some medicines that fight diseases or that might help stop bleeding?

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\* Some doctors may view the four main parts of blood as fractions. Therefore, you may need to explain your personal decision not to accept transfusions of whole blood or its four main parts, namely, red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma.



## UNACCEPTABLE

## CHRISTIAN TO DECIDE

**Whole  
Blood**



**Red Cells**

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Fractions  
from red cells

**White Cells**

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Fractions  
from white cells

**Platelets**

-----

Fractions  
from platelets

**Plasma**

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Fractions  
from plasma

- How would I explain to a doctor why I reject or accept the use of one or more blood fractions?

**Medical procedures.** As Christians, we do not donate blood, nor do we store our own blood weeks in advance of surgery. However, there are other procedures that make use of a patient's own blood. Each Christian must decide for himself how his own blood will be handled *in the course of a surgical procedure, medical test, or current therapy*. During the course of such procedures, the patient's own blood may be completely separated for a time from the patient.—For more information, see *The Watchtower*, October 15, 2000, pages 30-31.

For example, there is a procedure called hemodilution, in which immediately before surgery a portion of a patient's own blood is removed and replaced with a volume expander. Later, during or shortly after the surgery, the blood is returned to the patient.

Another procedure is called cell salvage. In this procedure, a patient's own blood that is lost during surgery is collected, cleaned, and then returned to the patient during or shortly after the surgery.

Each doctor may perform these procedures slightly differently. So before accepting any surgical procedure, medical test, or current therapy, a Christian needs to find out exactly how his own blood will be handled.

When making decisions about medical procedures that make use of your own blood, consider the following questions:

- If some of my blood will be diverted outside my body and the flow might even be interrupted for a time, will my conscience allow me to view this blood as still part of me, thus not requiring that it be poured "out on the ground"?—Deuteronomy 12: 23, 24.
- Will my Bible-trained conscience be troubled if during a medical procedure, some of my own blood is withdrawn, modified, and directed back into (or onto) my body?
- Am I aware that refusing all medical procedures involving the use of my own blood means that I would not accept a blood test, hemodialysis, or the use of a heart-lung bypass machine?

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An appropriate legal document, such as a Health Care Proxy, may be used to record your decision to refuse transfusions of whole blood and its four main parts. This document may protect you from receiving a blood transfusion. It may also be used to record your decisions about blood fractions and procedures that make use of your own blood.

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Before making decisions about blood fractions and medical treatments that make use of our own blood, we need to pray for Jehovah's guidance and then do research. (James 1:5, 6) After that, we must use our Bible-trained conscience to make our decision. We should not ask others what they would do if they were in our situation, nor should others try to influence our decision.—Romans 14:12; Galatians 6:5.

▶ Chapter 7, paragraph 11

## 22 MORAL CLEANNES

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To be morally clean means that our conduct and actions are clean in God's view. Moral cleanness involves what we think, say, and do. Jehovah commands us to avoid any kind of sexual uncleanness or immorality. (Proverbs 1:10; 3:1) We must decide that we will follow Jehovah's clean standards even before we are in a situation that could tempt us to do something wrong. We need to pray constantly for God's help to keep our minds pure, and we must be determined to reject immoral temptations.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, 18; Ephesians 5:5.

▶ Chapter 8, paragraph 11

## 23 BRAZEN CONDUCT AND UNCLEANNES

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Brazen conduct involves speaking or acting in a way that is a serious violation of God's standards and reflects a shameless attitude. A person who does this shows that he does not respect God's laws. When a person is guilty of brazen conduct, a judicial committee will handle the matter. Uncleanness includes various types of wrongdoing. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, some matters involving uncleanness might need to be handled by a judicial committee in the congregation.—Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:19; for more information, see "Questions From Readers" in *The Watchtower* of July 15, 2006.

▶ Chapter 9, paragraph 7; Chapter 12, paragraph 10

## 24 MASTURBATION

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Jehovah designed sex to be a clean expression of love between a husband and a wife. But when someone masturbates, or misuses his or her genitals for sexual pleasure, he or she is using sex in an unclean way. This habit can harm a person's relationship with Jehovah. It can create perverted desires and can cause the person to view sex in a distorted way. (Colossians 3:5) Someone who has this unclean habit and finds it difficult to stop should not give up. (Psalm 86:5; 1 John 3:20) If this is your situation, sincerely pray to Jehovah and ask him to help you. Avoid things such as pornography, which will lead you into unclean thinking. Speak with one of your Christian parents or with a mature friend who respects Jehovah's laws. (Proverbs 1:8, 9; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Titus 2:3-5) You can be sure that Jehovah sees and values your efforts to keep morally clean.—Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 1:18.

▶ Chapter 9, paragraph 9

## 25 POLYGAMY

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The custom of having more than one marriage mate is called polygamy. Jehovah designed marriage to be between one man and one woman. In ancient Israel, God allowed men to have more than one wife, but this was not his original purpose. Today, Jehovah does not allow polygamy among his people. A husband can have only one wife, and a wife can have only one husband.—Matthew 19:9; 1 Timothy 3:2.

▶ Chapter 10, paragraph 12

## 26 DIVORCE AND SEPARATION

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Jehovah intended for a husband and a wife to stay together for as long as they live. (Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15, 16; Matthew 19:3-6; 1 Corinthians 7:39) He allows divorce only when a mate is guilty of adultery. In such a case, Jehovah gives the innocent mate the right to decide whether he or she will get a divorce.—Matthew 19:9.

At times, some Christians have decided to separate from their mate even though no immorality has taken place. (1 Corinthians 7:11) In the following situations, a Christian may consider separation.

- Willful nonsupport: A husband refuses to provide for the family materially, to the point that the family is left without money or food.—1 Timothy 5:8.
- Severe physical abuse: Physical abuse to the point that a mate feels that his or her health or life is in danger.—Galatians 5:19-21.
- Absolute endangerment of a person's relationship with Jehovah: A husband or a wife makes it impossible for the mate to serve Jehovah.—Acts 5:29.

▶ Chapter 11, paragraph 19

## 27 COMMENDATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

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All of us need commendation and encouragement. (Proverbs 12:25; 16:24) We can strengthen and comfort one another with loving and kind words. Such expressions can help our brothers and sisters to endure and keep serving Jehovah despite great difficulties. (Proverbs 12:18; Philippians 2:1-4) If someone feels very discouraged, we should listen to him respectfully and try to understand how he feels. That can help us to know what we can say or do to help him. (James 1:19) Make it your goal to know your brothers and sisters well so that you genuinely understand what they need. Then you can help them to turn to the Source of all comfort and encouragement, where they can find true refreshment.—2 Corinthians 1:3, 4; 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

▶ Chapter 12, paragraph 16

## 28 WEDDINGS

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The Bible does not make specific rules about weddings. Local customs and legal requirements are different from place to place. (Genesis 24:67; Matthew 1:24; 25:10; Luke 14:8) The most

important part of a wedding is the vow a couple make before Jehovah. Many couples choose to have their family and close friends present when they say their vows and to have an elder give a Bible-based talk. It is up to the couple to decide what sort of reception, if any, they will have after their wedding. (Luke 14:28; John 2:1-11) Whatever a couple decide about how they will arrange their wedding, they should make sure that it brings honor to Jehovah. (Genesis 2:18-24; Matthew 19:5, 6) Bible principles can help them to make good decisions. (1 John 2:16, 17) If the couple choose to serve alcohol at their reception, they should make sure that the gathering will be properly supervised. (Proverbs 20:1; Ephesians 5:18) If they choose to have any music or entertainment, they should make sure that these things will bring honor to Jehovah. A Christian couple should focus on their relationship with God and with each other rather than on just the wedding day.—Proverbs 18:22; for more suggestions, see *The Watchtower* of October 15, 2006, pages 18-31.

► Chapter 13, paragraph 18

## 29 MAKING WISE DECISIONS

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We want to make good decisions that are based on the principles of God's Word. For example, a Christian may be invited by his or her marriage mate who is not one of Jehovah's Witnesses to have a meal with relatives during a worldly holiday. If this is your situation, what will you do? If your conscience allows you to go, you could explain to your mate that if pagan customs are part of the meal, you will not participate in them. You should also consider whether others will be stumbled if you go to the meal.—1 Corinthians 8:9; 10:23, 24.

Or your employer might offer you a bonus during the holiday season. Should you reject the bonus? Not necessarily. Your decision whether to accept it or not may depend to some extent on how your employer views it. Does he view the bonus as part of the celebration? Or is it simply a way to show appreciation? Reasoning on

these and other factors, you would need to decide whether to accept the bonus.

In another situation, someone may give you a gift during the holiday season and say: "I know that you do not celebrate the holiday, but I want you to have this." Perhaps the person is just being kind. On the other hand, is there reason to think that he is trying to test your faith or involve you in celebrating the holiday? After considering this, it is up to you to decide whether or not to accept the gift. In all our decisions, we want to have a good conscience and be faithful to Jehovah.—Acts 23:1.

► Chapter 13, paragraph 22

## 30 BUSINESS AND LEGAL MATTERS

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In most cases, when disagreements are handled promptly and peaceably, they do not need to become major issues. (Matthew 5: 23-26) For all Christians, their first priority should be to bring glory to Jehovah and keep the congregation united.—John 13:34, 35; 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5.

If Christians have a disagreement over a business matter, they should try to settle it without taking each other to court. First Corinthians 6:1-8 records the apostle Paul's counsel concerning lawsuits between Christians. Taking our brother to court could reflect badly on Jehovah and on the congregation. At Matthew 18:15-17, three steps are listed that Christians should follow to settle such serious accusations as slander or fraud. (1) They should first try to settle the matter between themselves. (2) If that doesn't work, they can ask one or two mature members of the congregation for help. (3) Then, if necessary, they can turn the matter over to the body of elders to handle. If the situation reaches that point, the elders will use Bible principles to try to help all involved to reach a peaceful agreement. If certain individuals involved are not willing to follow Bible standards, it may be necessary for the congregation elders to take judicial action.

There are some situations in which a lawsuit may be legally necessary, perhaps situations involving divorce, child custody, alimony, insurance compensation, bankruptcy, or wills. If a Christian uses such legal means to settle the matter as peaceably as he can, he is not violating Paul's counsel.

If a serious crime is involved, such as rape, child abuse, assault, major theft, or murder, then a Christian who reports such a crime to the secular authorities does not violate Paul's counsel.

► Chapter 14, paragraph 14

## 31 SATAN'S DECEPTIONS

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From the time of the garden of Eden, Satan has been trying to deceive humans. (Genesis 3:1-6; Revelation 12:9) He knows that if he can distort our thinking, he can influence us to do what is bad. (2 Corinthians 4:4; James 1:14, 15) He uses politics, religion, commerce, entertainment, education, and many other things to promote his way of thinking and make it seem acceptable.—John 14:30; 1 John 5:19.

Satan knows that he does not have much time left to deceive people. So he is doing all he can to mislead as many people as possible. He especially wants to mislead those who serve Jehovah. (Revelation 12:12) If we are not careful, the Devil could gradually corrupt our thinking. (1 Corinthians 10:12) For example, Jehovah wants marriages to last. (Matthew 19:5, 6, 9) But many people today view marriage as a casual agreement that can be easily broken. Many movies and television programs promote this idea too. We must make sure that we do not allow the world's view of marriage to affect us.

Another way Satan tries to deceive us is by promoting an independent attitude. (2 Timothy 3:4) If we are not careful, we could lose our respect for the authority of those appointed by Jehovah. For example, a brother might begin to resist the guidance of the congregation elders. (Hebrews 12:5) Or a sister might start to question



Jehovah's arrangement of headship in the family.—1 Corinthians 11:3.

We must be determined not to allow the Devil to influence our thinking. Rather, we want to imitate Jehovah's thinking and keep our "minds fixed on the things above."—Colossians 3:2; 2 Corinthians 2:11.

► Chapter 16, paragraph 9

## 32 MEDICAL TREATMENT

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We all want to be healthy and to get the best care we can when we are not well. (Isaiah 38:21; Mark 5:25, 26; Luke 10:34) Today, there are many medical techniques and treatments available from doctors and others. When we are deciding what treatment we will accept, it is important that we follow Bible principles. We remember that only God's Kingdom will heal us permanently. We do not want to become so focused on our health that we neglect our worship of Jehovah.—Isaiah 33:24; 1 Timothy 4:16.

We must carefully avoid any treatment that appears to use power from the demons. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Isaiah 1:13) So before we accept any treatment or medicine, we need to find out all we can about what is behind it and what thinking it promotes. (Proverbs 14:15) We must not forget that Satan would like to trick us into getting involved with demonism. If we even suspect that a treatment is connected with demonism, it is best to avoid it.—1 Peter 5:8.

► Chapter 16, paragraph 18

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