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Cherish Your Place in Jehovah's Family

“You made him a little lower than angels, and you crowned him with glory and splendor.”—PS. 8:5, fn.

SONG 123

Loyally Submitting to Theocratic Order

PREVIEW

In order for a family to function well, each member must know what is expected of him and must cooperate with other family members. The father lovingly takes the lead, the mother supports him, and the children obediently work along with their parents. It is similar with Jehovah's family. Our God has a purpose for us, and if we cooperate with that purpose, we will belong to Jehovah's family of worshippers forever.

WHEN we ponder the vast universe that Jehovah has created, we may feel as did the psalmist David, who prayerfully asked: “When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and a son of man that you take care of him?” (Ps. 8:3, 4) Like David, we may look at the small place we occupy in the universe and marvel that Jehovah keeps us in mind at all. Yet, as we shall see, Jehovah not only took notice of the first humans, Adam and Eve, but also made them part of his family.

² Adam and Eve were Jehovah’s first earthly children, and Jehovah was their loving heavenly Father. He expected this couple to be productive family members. God told them: “Be fruitful and become many, fill the earth and subdue it.” (Gen. 1:28) They were to have children and take good care of their earthly home. If they had obediently cooperated with Jehovah’s purpose for them, Adam and Eve and their offspring would have remained members of God’s family forever.

³ Adam and Eve had an honorable place in

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1. What questions may come to mind when we ponder all that Jehovah has created?
 2. What was Jehovah’s purpose for his first earthly children?
 3. Why can we say that Adam and Eve were assigned an honorable place in Jehovah’s family?

Jehovah's family. As recorded at Psalm 8:5 and footnote, David said this about Jehovah's creation of man: "You made him a little lower than angels, and you crowned him with glory and splendor." True, humans were not given the same power, intelligence, and abilities as the angels. (Ps. 103:20) Yet, mankind is only "a little lower" than those mighty spirit creatures. Imagine that! Jehovah truly gave our first parents a wonderful start.

⁴ Sadly, Adam and Eve lost their place in Jehovah's family. This has had disastrous consequences for their descendants, as we will see later in this article. But Jehovah's purpose has not changed. He wants obedient humans to be his children forever. First, let us discuss how Jehovah has honored us. Then, we will discuss what we can do now to show that we want to be part of God's family. Finally, we will consider the blessings that Jehovah's earthly children will enjoy forever.

HOW JEHOVAH HAS HONORED HUMANS

⁵ *Jehovah honored us by making us in his image.* (Gen. 1:26, 27) Because we are made in God's image, we can develop and manifest many of his wonderful qualities, such as love, compassion, loyalty, and righ-

4. What happened to Adam and Eve's place in Jehovah's family, and what will we discuss in this article?

5. How can we honor God for making us in his image?

teousness. (Ps. 86:15; 145:17) As we cultivate such qualities, we honor Jehovah and prove that we are grateful to him. (1 Pet. 1:14-16) When we behave in a way that pleases our heavenly Father, we are happy and satisfied. And by making us in his image, Jehovah gave us the ability to become the kind of people he wants in his family.

⁶ *Jehovah prepared a special home for us.* Long before he created the first man, Jehovah prepared the earth for humans. (Job 38:4-6; Jer. 10:12) Because he is thoughtful and generous, Jehovah provided an abundance of good things for us to enjoy. (Ps. 104: 14, 15, 24) At times, he reflected on his creative work, and he “saw that it was good.” (Gen. 1:10, 12, 31) He honored humans by giving them “dominion over” all his marvelous works on earth. (Ps. 8:6) God’s purpose is that perfect humans have the joy of caring for these grand works forever. Do you regularly thank Jehovah for that wonderful promise?

⁷ *Jehovah has given us the gift of free will.* We can choose which course we will take in life. (Read Joshua 24:15.) The ability to choose is called free will. Our loving God rejoices when we choose to serve him. (Ps. 84:11; Prov. 27:11) We can use our free will

6. How did Jehovah honor humans when preparing the earth?

7. How does Joshua 24:15 indicate that man has free will?

properly in many areas. Consider the example set by Jesus.

⁸ Following the example of Jesus, we can choose to put the interests of others ahead of our own. Once when Jesus and his apostles were very tired, they traveled to a quiet place where they hoped to get some rest. However, that was not to be. A crowd found them, and they were eager to be taught by Jesus. But Jesus did not become irritated. Instead, he

8. What is one way in which Jesus used his ability to choose?

In what ways has Jehovah honored us?
(See paragraphs 5-11)



felt pity for the people. So, what did Jesus do? “He started to teach them *many* things.” (Mark 6:30-34) When we imitate Jesus by sacrificing our time and energy to help others, we bring glory to our heavenly Father. (Matt. 5:14-16) We also show Jehovah that we want to be part of his family.

⁹ *Jehovah has given humans the ability to have children, as well as the responsibility to teach them to love and to serve him.* If you are a parent, do you appreciate this special gift? Although the angels are highly blessed by Jehovah, they have not been granted this privilege. With that in mind, those who are raising children should treasure their opportunity to do so. Parents have been given a trust, a sacred duty to raise their children in “the discipline and admonition of Jehovah.” (Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:5-7; Ps. 127:3) In order to help parents, God’s organization provides many Bible-based tools, such as publications, videos, music, and online resources. Clearly, both our heavenly Father and his Son cherish our young ones. (Luke 18:15-17) When parents rely on Jehovah and do their very best to care for their precious children, Jehovah is pleased. And such parents give their children the prospect of becoming part of Jehovah’s family forever!

9. What should parents keep in mind?

¹⁰ *Jehovah gave his most precious Son so that we can once again become members of His family.* As we mentioned in paragraph 4, Adam and Eve lost their place in Jehovah's family, and they lost a place for their children. (Rom. 5:12) Adam and Eve deliberately disobeyed God, so they deserved to be disinherited by him. But what of their offspring? Jehovah lovingly made a provision for deserving ones among them to be adopted into his family. He did this by means of the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. (John 3:16; Rom. 5:19) As a result of Jesus' sacrifice, 144,000 integrity-keeping humans are adopted as God's sons.—Rom. 8:15-17; Rev. 14:1.

¹¹ Additionally, untold millions of other faithful ones are obediently doing God's will. They have the prospect of full membership in God's family after the final test at the end of the Millennium. (Ps. 25:14; Rom. 8:20, 21) With that prospect in mind, even now they address Jehovah, their Creator, as "Father." (Matt. 6:9) Resurrected ones too will be given the opportunity to learn what Jehovah expects of them. Those who respond well to his direction will eventually also become members of his family.

10-11. What has Jehovah made possible for us by means of the ransom?

¹² As we have seen, Jehovah has taken the initiative to honor humans in many ways. He has already adopted anointed ones as his sons, and he has granted those of the “great crowd” the prospect of full sonship in the new world. (Rev. 7:9) What can we do now to show Jehovah that we want to be part of his family forever?

SHOW JEHOVAH THAT YOU WANT TO BE PART OF HIS FAMILY

¹³ *Show your love for Jehovah by serving him with your whole heart.* (Read Mark 12:30.) Of all the things that we have been kindly given by God, perhaps one of the greatest gifts is the ability to worship him. We show Jehovah that we love him by ‘observing his commandments.’ (1 John 5:3) Speaking for his Father, Jesus commanded us to make disciples, baptizing them. (Matt. 28:19) He also commanded us to love one another. (John 13:35) Jehovah will make obedient ones a part of his worldwide family of worshippers.—Ps. 15:1, 2.

¹⁴ *Show love for others.* Love is Jehovah’s foremost

12. What question will we now answer?

13. What can we do to become a part of God’s family? (Mark 12:30)

14. How can we show love for others? (Matthew 9:36-38; Romans 12:10)

quality. (1 John 4:8) Jehovah showed love for us before we ever knew him. (1 John 4:9, 10) We imitate him when we show love for others. (Eph. 5:1) One of the best ways we can show love for people is by helping them learn about Jehovah while there is still time. (Read Matthew 9:36-38.) In doing so, we give them an opportunity to become prospective members of God's family. After a person gets baptized, we must continue to love and respect him. (1 John 4:20, 21) What does this involve? For one thing, we give him the benefit of the doubt whenever possible. For example, we would not impute bad or selfish motives to him. Instead, we would show honor for our brother, considering him to be superior to us.—Read Romans 12:10; Phil. 2:3.

¹⁵ *Show mercy and kindness to all people.* If we want to be among those who can rightly call Jehovah their Father forever, we must apply God's Word in our lives. For instance, Jesus taught that we should show mercy and kindness to all people, even our enemies. (Luke 6:32-36) We may find that at times this is difficult for us to do. If so, we must learn to think and act like Jesus. When we do our best to obey Jehovah and imitate Jesus, we show our heavenly Father that we want to be part of his family forever.

15. To whom should we show mercy and kindness?

16 *Protect the reputation of Jehovah's family.* In a literal family, it is not uncommon for a little boy to copy his older brother. If the older sibling applies Bible principles in his life, he will serve as a good example for his younger brother. If the older one turns to doing what is wrong, the younger brother may follow his bad example. It is similar in Jehovah's family. If a once faithful Christian later adopts apostate thinking or chooses an immoral or a corrupt way of life, others may be tempted to join him in doing what is bad. Those who do so harm the reputation of Jehovah's family of worshippers. (1 Thess. 4:3-8) We must avoid following bad examples and not allow anything to pull us away from our loving heavenly Father.

17 *Trust in Jehovah instead of in material things.* Jehovah promises that he will provide us with food, clothing, and shelter if we seek his Kingdom first and live by his righteous standards. (Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:33) With that in mind, we avoid thinking that the material things this world offers will bring us security and lasting happiness. We know that the only way we can gain real peace of mind is by doing Jehovah's will. (Phil. 4:6, 7) Even if we can afford to buy many things, we must consider whether we really have the

16. How can we protect the reputation of Jehovah's family?

17. What kind of thinking should we avoid, and why?

time or the energy to use and care for such things. Might we become too attached to our possessions? We must remember that God expects us to be productive members of his family. That means we should not allow ourselves to be distracted. We certainly do not want to be like the young man who turned down the opportunity to serve Jehovah as well as the potential to be adopted as one of his sons—all because he was attached to a few earthly possessions!—Mark 10:17-22.

WHAT JEHOVAH'S CHILDREN WILL ENJOY FOREVER

¹⁸ Obedient humans will enjoy the greatest honor of all—the privilege of loving and worshipping Jehovah forever! Those with an earthly hope will also have the joy of caring for this beautiful planet that Jehovah so perfectly designed to be their home. Soon the earth and all life on it will be renewed under Kingdom rule. Jesus will undo the conditions that resulted when Adam and Eve decided to leave God's family. Jehovah will resurrect millions and give them the opportunity for everlasting life in perfect health on an earth transformed into a paradise. (Luke 23:42, 43) As the earthly part of Jehovah's

18. What great honor and what blessings will obedient humans enjoy forever?

family of worshippers grows to perfection, each one will reflect the “glory and splendor” that David wrote about.—Ps. 8:5.

¹⁹ If you belong to the “great crowd,” you have a wonderful prospect. God loves you; he wants you to be a member of his family. So do all you can to please him. Live each day with God’s promises in your mind and heart. Appreciate your privilege of worshipping our dear heavenly Father, and cherish the prospect of praising him forever!

19. What should we keep in mind?

PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 6: Being made in God’s image enables a couple to show love and compassion to each other and to their sons. The couple love Jehovah. The gift of having children gives them the opportunity to raise their sons to love and serve Jehovah. The parents use a video to explain to them why Jehovah provided Jesus as a ransom. They also teach them that in the Paradise to come, we will care for the earth and the animals forever.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- How has Jehovah honored humans?
- How can we show Jehovah that we want to be part of his family?
- What will Jehovah’s children soon enjoy?

SONG 107

The Divine Pattern of Love

Are You Willing to Wait on Jehovah?

“I will show a waiting attitude.”—MIC. 7:7.

SONG 128

Enduring to the End

PREVIEW

Have you ever heard a longtime servant of Jehovah say, ‘I never expected that at my age I would still be living in this system of things’? All of us are eager to see Jehovah bring the end, especially in these difficult times. Yet, we must learn to be patient. In this article, we will look at Bible principles that can help us to have a waiting attitude. We will also examine two areas in which we must patiently wait on Jehovah. Finally, we will consider the blessings that are in store for those who are willing to wait.

HOW do you feel when a package containing an item that you really need does not arrive when you are expecting it? Are you disappointed? Proverbs 13:12 realistically states: “Expectation postponed makes the heart sick.” But what if you learn that there are good reasons why the package did not arrive when you expected it to come? In that case, you would likely be patient and willing to wait.

² In this article, we will look at several Bible principles that can help us to develop and keep “a waiting attitude.” (Mic. 7:7) Then, we will examine two areas in which we must patiently wait for Jehovah to act. Finally, we will consider the blessings that are in store for those who are willing to wait on Jehovah.

BIBLE PRINCIPLES THAT TEACH US PATIENCE

³ An example that illustrates the need for patience is recorded at Proverbs 13:11. It says: “Wealth quickly gained will dwindle, but the wealth of the one who gathers it *little by little* will increase.” Do you see the principle? There is wisdom in doing things patiently, one step at a time.

1-2. What will we consider in this article?

3. What does the principle recorded at Proverbs 13:11 highlight?

⁴ Proverbs 4:18 tells us that “the path of the righteous is like the bright morning light that grows brighter and brighter until full daylight.” These words aptly apply to the way in which Jehovah reveals his purpose to his people—gradually. However, the verse can also be applied more broadly to the way in which a Christian makes spiritual progress in his life. Spiritual growth cannot be rushed. It takes time. If we diligently study and apply the counsel we receive through God’s Word and his organization, we will gradually develop a Christlike personality. We will also grow in our knowledge of God. Consider how Jesus illustrated that point.

⁵ Jesus used an illustration to explain how the Kingdom message we preach is like a tiny seed that gradually develops in honesthearted ones. He said: “The seeds sprout and grow tall—just how, he [the sower] does not know. On its own the ground bears fruit gradually, first the stalk, then the head, finally the full grain in the head.” (Mark 4:27, 28) What point was Jesus making? He was explaining that just as a plant grows little by little, so a person who accepts the Kingdom message grows spiritually little by little. For example, as our sincere Bible students

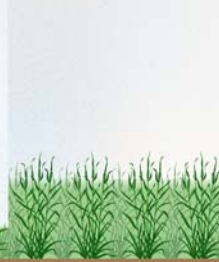
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4. What does the principle found at Proverbs 4:18 highlight?
 5. How did Jesus illustrate gradual growth?

draw closer to Jehovah, we begin to see the many fine changes that they have made. (Eph. 4:22-24) But we must remember that it is Jehovah who makes that tiny seed grow.—1 Cor. 3:7.

⁶ In all that he does, Jehovah patiently takes whatever time is needed to complete his work. He does so both for the glory of his name and for the benefit of others. Consider, for example, the step-by-step manner in which Jehovah prepared the earth for mankind.

⁷ When describing how Jehovah created the earth, the Bible speaks of his setting “its measurements,” sinking “its pedestals,” and laying “its cornerstone.” (Job 38:5, 6) He even took the time to reflect on his work. (Gen. 1:10, 12) Can you imagine how the

6-7. What do we learn from the way that Jehovah created the earth?



Just as a plant grows little by little, so a person who hears and accepts the Kingdom message grows spiritually little by little

(See paragraph 5)

angels felt as they saw Jehovah’s creative works gradually taking shape? How exciting that must have been for them! Why, at one point, they began “shouting in applause.” (Job 38:7) What do we learn? Jehovah’s creative works took many thousands of years to accomplish, but when Jehovah surveyed everything that he had created so thoughtfully, he pronounced it “very good.”—Gen. 1:31.

⁸ As we have seen in the examples above, we can find many principles in God’s Word that highlight the need for patience. We will now look at two specific areas in which we must be willing to wait on Jehovah.

WHEN DO WE NEED TO WAIT ON JEHOVAH?

⁹ *We may need to wait for our prayers to be answered.* When we pray for strength to deal with a trial or for help to overcome a weakness, we may feel that the relief we are seeking is taking longer than we had hoped. Why does Jehovah not answer all our prayers right away?

¹⁰ Jehovah listens carefully to our prayers. (Ps. 65:2) He views our sincere prayers as evidence of our faith. (Heb. 11:6) Jehovah is also interested in

8. What will we now consider?

9. What is one area in which we need to wait on Jehovah?

10. Why is patience needed when it comes to our prayers?

seeing how determined we are to live in harmony with our prayers and to do his will. (1 John 3:22) So we may need to show patience and work along with our prayers whenever we are trying to overcome a bad habit or a weakness. Jesus implied that some of our prayers might not be answered immediately. He urged: “Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you; for everyone asking receives, and everyone seeking finds, and to everyone knocking, it will be opened.” (Matt. 7:7, 8) When we follow this advice and “persevere in prayer,” we can be confident that our heavenly Father hears us and will answer our prayers.—Col. 4:2.

¹¹ Although an answer to a prayer may seem to be delayed, Jehovah promises to answer our prayer “at the right time.” (Read Hebrews 4:16.) That is why we must never blame Jehovah if something does not happen as quickly as we think it should. For example, many have been praying for years to see God’s Kingdom bring an end to this system of things. Jesus even said that we should pray for this. (Matt. 6:10) But how foolish it would be if someone allowed his faith in God to weaken because the end did not come

11. How does Hebrews 4:16 help us when an answer to a prayer seems to be delayed?



While we wait
on Jehovah,
we keep praying
to him in faith
(See paragraph 11)

when *humans* expected it! (Hab. 2:3; Matt. 24:44) We are wise to keep waiting on Jehovah and praying to him in faith. The end will come at exactly the right time, for Jehovah has already chosen the “day and hour” for it to arrive. And that day will prove to be the best time for all.—Matt. 24:36; 2 Pet. 3:15.

¹² *We may need to be patient while waiting for justice to be done.* People in this world often mistreat those who are of a different gender, race, ethnicity, tribe, or nationality. Others are mistreated because of having physical or mental disabilities. Many of Jehovah’s people have endured injustice because of their Bible-based beliefs. When we are wronged in such ways, we must keep in mind Jesus’ words. He said: “The one who has endured to the end will be

12. In what situation especially might our patience be tried?

saved.” (Matt. 24:13) But what if you become aware of serious wrongdoing by someone in the congregation? After the elders have been informed of the matter, will you leave it in their hands, patiently waiting for them to care for it in Jehovah’s way? What might be involved?

¹³ When the elders become aware of serious wrongdoing in the congregation, they prayerfully seek “wisdom from above” so that they can get Jehovah’s view on the situation. (Jas. 3:17) Their goal is to help the one who is sinning to turn “back from the error of his way” if possible. (Jas. 5:19, 20) They also want to do everything they can to protect the congregation and to comfort those who have been hurt. (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) When handling cases of serious wrongdoing, the elders must first get all the facts, which may take some time. Then they prayerfully and carefully provide counsel from the Scriptures and apply correction “to the proper degree.” (Jer. 30:11) Although they do not procrastinate, the elders do not rush to judgment. When matters are handled properly, the congregation will see the greatest good come to all. Yet, even when problems are cared for in this manner, an innocent person may still feel hurt. If this is true of you, what can you do to lessen the pain?

13. What is involved in handling matters Jehovah’s way?



What lesson about patience can we learn from Joseph?
(See paragraphs 12-14)

14 Have you ever been severely wronged by someone, even by a fellow worshipper? You can find outstanding examples in God's Word that teach us how to wait on Jehovah to correct matters. For instance, although Joseph suffered injustice at the hands of his own brothers, he did not allow their sins to cause him to become a bitter person. Instead, he remained focused on his service to Jehovah, who richly rewarded him for his patient endurance. (Gen. 39:21) Over time, Joseph was able to look past the hurt he had experienced and see how Jehovah had blessed him. (Gen. 45:5) Like Joseph, we are comforted

14. What Bible example can help you to cope if you have been severely hurt by another Christian?

when we draw close to Jehovah and leave justice in his hands.—Ps. 7:17; 73:28.

¹⁵ Of course, not all injustices are as serious as those Joseph experienced, but bad treatment of some kind may still cause us heartache. When we have a problem with someone, including someone who does not worship Jehovah, we will benefit if we apply Bible principles. (Phil. 2:3, 4) Consider one experience. A sister was deeply hurt when she discovered that a coworker was making negative, untrue comments about her to others. Rather than react too quickly, the sister took time to reflect on Jesus' example. When he was insulted, he did not insult others in return. (1 Pet. 2:21, 23) With that in mind, she decided not to make an issue of what had happened. Later, she learned that her coworker had been coping with a serious health problem and was experiencing a lot of stress. The sister concluded that the coworker likely did not mean what she had said. So the sister was especially glad that she had patiently endured the mistreatment, and she found peace.

¹⁶ If you are enduring an injustice or some other

15. What helped one sister to put an injustice behind her?

16. What can be of comfort if you are enduring an injustice? (1 Peter 3:12)

cause for hurt, remember that Jehovah draws close to “the brokenhearted.” (Ps. 34:18) He loves you for your patience and for throwing your burden on him. (Ps. 55:22) He is the Judge of all the earth. Nothing escapes his notice. (Read 1 Peter 3:12.) When you are undergoing difficulties that you cannot resolve, are you willing to wait on him?

ENDLESS BLESSINGS FOR THOSE WHO WAIT ON JEHOVAH

¹⁷ Soon our heavenly Father will bless us richly by means of his Kingdom. Isaiah 30:18 says: “Jehovah is waiting patiently to show you favor, and he will rise up to show you mercy. For Jehovah is a God of justice. Happy are all those keeping in expectation of him.” Those who keep in expectation of Jehovah will receive many blessings both now and in the new world to come.

¹⁸ When God’s people enter into the new world, they will never again have to endure the anxieties and the challenges that they must face today. Injustice will be gone, and pain will be no more. (Rev. 21:4) We will not have to wait anxiously for what we

17. As recorded at Isaiah 30:18, what assurance does Jehovah give us?

18. What blessings await us?

need because there will be an abundance. (Ps. 72:16; Isa. 54:13) What a blessing that will be!

¹⁹ In the meantime, with every bad habit we conquer and every godly quality we develop, Jehovah is preparing us for life under his rulership. Do not lose heart, and do not give up. The best is yet to come! With a bright future ahead of us, may we continue to wait willingly and patiently on Jehovah as he completes his work!

19. What is Jehovah gradually preparing us for now?

PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 20: From childhood on, a sister has been regularly praying to Jehovah. When she was little, her parents taught her how to pray. As a teenager, she began serving as a pioneer and often asked Jehovah to bless her ministry. Years later, when her husband became very ill, she supplicated Jehovah for the strength needed to endure this trial. Today, as a widow, she perseveres in prayer, confident that her heavenly Father will answer her prayers—just as he has done throughout her life.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What Bible principles can help us to have a waiting attitude?
- In what two areas must we show patience?
- What is in store for those who are willing to wait?

SONG 118
“Give Us More Faith”

Strengthen Your Faith in the Creator

“Faith is . . . the evident demonstration of realities that are not seen.”—HEB. 11:1.

SONG 11

Creation Praises God

PREVIEW

The Scriptures plainly teach that Jehovah God is the Creator. But many people do not believe that. They insist that life arose on its own. Their claims will not shake our confidence if we work hard to strengthen our faith in God and in the Bible. This article will explain how we can do that.

IF YOU were raised as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, you likely learned about Jehovah from an early age. You were taught that he is the Creator, that he has an appealing personality, and that he has a loving purpose for mankind.—Gen. 1:1; Acts 17:24-27.

² Many people, however, do not believe that God exists, let alone that he is the Creator. Instead, they believe that life started by chance and then slowly evolved from so-called simple life-forms to more complex forms of life. Some of these individuals are highly educated. They may claim that science has proved the Bible wrong and that faith in a Creator is for people who are ignorant, weak, or naive.

³ Will the views expressed by some influential people shake our faith that Jehovah is our loving Creator? This depends largely on *why* we believe that Jehovah is the Creator. Is it because we were told to believe that or because we have taken the time to examine the evidence for ourselves? (1 Cor. 3:12-15) No matter how long we have been one of Jehovah's Witnesses, we all need to keep building our faith. In doing so, we will not be misled by "the philosophy and empty deception" taught by men who contradict

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1. What have you been taught about our Creator?
 2. How do some people view those who believe in a Creator?
 3. Why is it important to build our own faith?

God's Word. (Col. 2:8; Heb. 11:6) To help us, this article will discuss (1) why many do not believe in a Creator, (2) how you can build your faith in Jehovah, your Creator, and (3) how you can keep that faith strong.

WHY MANY DO NOT BELIEVE IN A CREATOR

⁴ Some people think that having faith means believing in something without proof. But according to the Bible, that is not real faith. (Read Hebrews 11:1 and footnote.) Notice that faith in invisible realities, such as Jehovah, Jesus, and the heavenly Kingdom, is based on *convincing evidence*. (Heb. 11:3) One Witness who is a biochemist put it this way: "Our faith is not blind faith that ignores the facts of science."

⁵ We might ask, 'If convincing evidence of a Creator exists, why do many people believe that God had nothing to do with the origin of life?' Some have simply never examined the evidence for themselves. Robert, who is now one of Jehovah's Witnesses, says: "Since creation was never mentioned in school, I assumed that it was not true. It was not until I was in my 20's that I talked to Jehovah's Witnesses and

4. According to Hebrews 11:1 and footnote, on what is real faith based?

5. Why do many people believe that life began without a Creator?

An Appeal to Parents

Parents, endeavor to know what your children are being taught in school. What if you find out that some of the teachings include philosophies that contradict the Bible? Use our publications to help your children reason on convincing evidence. Also, beware of exposing your children to universities, where belief in God is scorned by many.



heard the logical and convincing arguments from the Bible in favor of creation.”*—See the box “An Appeal to Parents.”

⁶ Some do not believe in a Creator because they say that they believe only in what they can see. They make exceptions, of course, for such unseen things as gravity, which is, after all, a reality. The type of faith mentioned in the Bible involves evidence for other “*realities that are not seen.*” (Heb. 11:1) It takes time and

* In many public schools, creation is not discussed as a possible explanation for our existence. Some educators say that doing so would interfere with the students’ freedom of religion.

6. Why do some reject belief in a Creator?

effort to study the evidence for ourselves, and many people lack the motivation they need to do the work. A person who does not investigate the evidence for himself may conclude that there is no God.

⁷ After studying the evidence, some scientists have become convinced that God created the universe.* Like Robert, mentioned earlier, some may have simply assumed that there was no Creator because creation had never been taught in university. However, many scientists have come to know and love Jehovah. As was the case with these scientists, all of us must build our faith in God, no matter what our educational background. Nobody else can do that for us.

HOW TO BUILD YOUR FAITH IN THE CREATOR

⁸ How can you build *your* faith in the Creator? Let us consider four ways.

* Comments from over 60 professionals, including scientists, who believe in creation can be found in the current *Watch Tower Publications Index*. Under the subject “Science,” look for the heading “scientists expressing belief in creation.” Some of these comments can also be found in the *Research Guide for Jehovah’s Witnesses*. Under the subject “Science and Technology,” look for the heading “‘Interview’ (*Awake!* series).”

7. Do all educated people deny that God created the universe? Explain.

8-9. (a) What question will we now consider? (b) How will a study of creation benefit you?

⁹ *Study creation.* You can build your faith in the Creator by observing animals, plants, and stars. (Ps. 19:1; Isa. 40:26) The more you *study* such things, the more convinced you will become that Jehovah is the Creator. Our publications often contain articles that explain various aspects of creation. Do not shy away from such articles if you find them difficult to understand fully. Absorb as much as you can. And do not forget to review on our website, jw.org, the beautiful videos on creation that have been presented at our regional conventions in recent years.

¹⁰ When studying creation, pay careful attention to what the facts reveal about our Creator. (**Read Romans 1:20.**) For instance, you may know that our sun, in addition to providing life-giving heat, emits harmful energy in the form of ultraviolet rays. We humans need to be protected from those rays. And we are! How? Our earthly home has its own protective shield—a layer of ozone gas that filters out the harmful radiation. As the ultraviolet rays from the sun get more intense, the amount of ozone grows. Now, do you not agree that there must be someone behind this process and that he must be a loving and an intelligent Creator?

10. Give an example of how creation testifies to the existence of a Creator. (Romans 1:20)

Some Faith-Building Resources

Brochures:

The Origin of Life—Five Questions Worth Asking
Was Life Created?

Books:

Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?

Journals:

“Is There a Creator?”
special issue of *Awake!*
September 2006

Videos:

The Wonders of Creation Reveal God’s Glory

Series:

“Was It Designed?”
series in *Awake!*
and on jw.org



Ant Photo: © CSP Anterovium/age fotostock

¹¹ You can find many faith-building facts about creation by consulting the *Watch Tower Publications Index* and by doing research on jw.org. You might wish to start with articles and videos from the series “Was It Designed?” These are short and present a few amazing facts about animals and other cre-

11. Where can you find faith-building facts about creation? (See the box “Some Faith-Building Resources.”)

ations. They also contain examples of how scientists have tried to copy what they see in nature.

¹² ***Study the Bible.*** The biochemist mentioned earlier initially rejected the idea of a Creator. In time, though, he came to have faith. He says: “My faith was not based solely on what I studied in science. It was also based on a careful study of the Bible.” Perhaps you already have accurate knowledge of Bible teachings. Even so, to build faith in your Creator, you need to continue studying God’s Word. (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:97) Note the Bible’s detailed descriptions of historical events. Pay attention to its prophecies and to its internal harmony. Doing so can reinforce your faith that a loving, wise Creator made us and that he inspired the Bible.*—2 Tim. 3:14; 2 Pet. 1:21.

¹³ When studying God’s Word, note how helpful its counsel is. For example, the Bible long ago warned that the love of money is harmful and that it produces “many pains.” (1 Tim. 6:9, 10; Prov. 28:20;

* For example, see the article “Are Science and the Bible Compatible?” in the February 2011 issue of *Awake!* and the article “What Jehovah Foretells Comes to Be” in the January 1, 2008, issue of *The Watchtower*.

12. When studying the Bible, what are some things we should take note of?

13. What is one example of the wisdom found in God’s Word?

Matt. 6:24) Is that warning still relevant? The book *The Narcissism Epidemic* observes: “On average, materialistic people are less happy and more depressed. Even people who simply aspire to have more money suffer from poor mental health; they also report more physical health problems.” How helpful, then, is the Bible’s warning against developing a love of money! Can you think of additional Bible principles that have proved to be beneficial? The more we appreciate the Bible’s counsel, the more we will rely on the timeless wisdom provided by our loving Creator. (Jas. 1:5) As a result, our life will be more enjoyable. —Isa. 48:17, 18.

¹⁴ *Study with the right objective—to know Jehovah.* (John 17:3) As you study the Scriptures, you will note that a distinct personality emerges—one that harmonizes with the qualities reflected in creation. These qualities clearly belong to a real Person and are not a product of someone’s imagination. (Ex. 34:6, 7; Ps. 145:8, 9) As you come to know Jehovah better and better, your faith in him will grow, your love for him will deepen, and your friendship with him will become stronger.

¹⁵ *Share your faith in God with others.* As you do so,

14. What will a study of the Bible reveal about Jehovah?

15. How will you benefit from sharing your faith?

your own faith will be reinforced. But what if someone you witness to raises a question about the existence of God and you are unsure of how to reply? Try to find a Scriptural answer to the question in one of our publications, and then share it with the individual. (1 Pet. 3:15) You can also ask an experienced fellow Witness for help. Whether the unbeliever accepts answers from the Bible or not, you will benefit from having done the research. Your faith will grow stronger. As a result, you will not be vulnerable to the false claims of the seemingly wise and intellectual ones who say that there is no Creator.

MAINTAIN YOUR FAITH!

¹⁶ No matter how long we have been serving Jehovah, we must continue to build and maintain our faith in him. Why? Because if we are not careful, our faith can weaken. Remember, faith involves evidence of *unseen* realities. What we cannot see, we may easily forget. Thus, Paul called lack of faith “the sin that easily entangles us.” (Heb. 12:1) How, then, can we avoid that trap?—2 Thess. 1:3.

¹⁷ First, *beg Jehovah for his holy spirit, and do so*

16. What can happen if we do not continue to build and maintain our faith?

17. What help do we need to maintain faith?

often. Why? Because faith is an aspect of the fruitage of the spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) We cannot build and maintain faith in our Creator without the help of his holy spirit. If we keep asking Jehovah for his spirit, he will give it to us. (Luke 11:13) In particular, we can pray: “Give us more faith.”—Luke 17:5.

¹⁸ Additionally, *be consistent in your personal study of God’s Word*. (Read Psalm 1:2, 3.) When that psalm was composed, few Israelites had a complete written copy of God’s Law. However, the king and the priests had access to copies, and every seven years, arrangements were made for “the men, the women, the children,” and the foreign residents of Israel to listen to the reading of God’s Law. (Deut. 31:10-12) In Jesus’ day, Scripture scrolls could be found only in the hands of a few and in synagogues. In contrast, today most people have access to portions of God’s Word. That is a real privilege. How can we show that we appreciate such a privilege?

¹⁹ We can show that we appreciate the privilege of having God’s Word by reading it regularly. We cannot afford to leave personal study to chance, doing it when we feel that we have the time. By sticking to a regular routine of study, we can keep our faith strong.

18. According to Psalm 1:2, 3, what privilege can we enjoy?

19. What do we need to do to keep our faith strong?

²⁰ Unlike “the wise and intellectual ones” of this world, we have solid faith based on God’s Word. (Matt. 11:25, 26) As a result of our study of that sacred volume, we know why conditions on earth are deteriorating and what Jehovah is going to do about it. So let us be determined to strengthen our faith and to help as many as possible to have faith in our Creator. (1 Tim. 2:3, 4) And let us continue to look forward to the time when all alive on earth will echo the words of Revelation 4:11: “You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory . . . because you created all things.”

20. What should we be determined to do?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Explain what faith is and what it is not.
- What are some ways you can build your faith in the Creator?
- How can you keep your faith strong?

Find Joy in the Privileges You Have

“Better to enjoy what the eyes see than to wander after one’s desires.”—ECCL. 6:9.

SONG 111

Our Reasons for Joy

PREVIEW

We love Jehovah very much, and we want to do all we can in his service. With that in mind, we might be moved to expand our ministry or to reach out to qualify for additional privileges in the congregation. But what if despite our best efforts, we are unable to reach some goals? How can we remain productive and maintain our joy? We find an answer in Jesus’ illustration of the talents.

WE HAVE a lot of work to do as this system nears its end. (Matt. 24:14; Luke 10:2; 1 Pet. 5:2) We all want to serve Jehovah as fully as we can. Many are expanding their ministry. Some hope to serve as pioneers. Others hope to serve at Bethel or share in the construction of theocratic facilities. And numerous brothers are reaching out to qualify as a ministerial servant or an elder. (1 Tim. 3:1, 8) How pleased Jehovah must be to see this willing spirit among his people!—Ps. 110:3; Isa. 6:8.

² We could begin to feel disheartened, however, if considerable time has passed and we have not yet reached some of our spiritual goals. Or we might be discouraged if because of age or other circumstances, some privileges are not available to us. (Prov. 13:12) That is the case with Melissa.* She would love to serve at Bethel or attend the School for Kingdom Evangelizers, but she states: “I am over the age limit.

* Some names have been changed.

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1. How are many responding to the needs in the field?
 2. How might we react if we do not reach some of our spiritual goals?

Now for me, those privileges are only a dream. At times, I feel discouraged.”

³ Some who are young and healthy may need to mature and display certain qualities before they can qualify for additional privileges. On the one hand, they may be intelligent, decisive, and eager; on the other hand, they may need to learn to be more patient, thorough, or respectful. If you focus on the needed qualities, a privilege of service may be extended to you when you least expect it. Consider the experience of Nick. When he was 20 years old, he was deeply disappointed because he was not appointed as a ministerial servant. He says, “I felt that there must be something wrong with me.” But Nick did not give up. He took full advantage of the privileges that were open to him. Today he serves as a member of a Branch Committee.

⁴ Are you discouraged because you have not yet reached a certain spiritual goal? If so, share your concerns with Jehovah. (Ps. 37:5-7) In addition, ask mature brothers for suggestions on how you can improve in your service to God, and then try your best to apply their counsel. If you do, you may well re-

3. What steps might some have to take in order to qualify for certain privileges?

4. What will we consider in this article?

ceive that privilege or reach that goal. But as is the case with Melissa, mentioned earlier, the privilege you desire may be beyond your reach at the present time. What then? How can you maintain your joy? To answer that question, this article will discuss (1) where to look for joy, (2) how to increase your joy, and (3) what kind of goals you can set that add to your joy.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR JOY

⁵ As recorded at Ecclesiastes 6:9, we can find joy if we look for it in the right place. (Read.) A person who *enjoys* “*what the eyes see*” appreciates what he has, such as his present circumstances. In contrast, the person who *wanders after his desires* keeps wishing for something he simply cannot have. So, what is the lesson for us? To find joy, we should focus on what we have and on what we can realistically hope to obtain.

⁶ Is it really possible to be satisfied with what you already have? After all, as time passes, we naturally seek out new challenges. Yes, it really is possible. We can *enjoy* and not merely settle for what our “eyes see.” How can we do that? To find out, let

5. To be joyful, on what should we focus? (Ecclesiastes 6:9)

6. What parable will we now consider, and on what will we focus?

us consider Jesus' parable of the talents, found at Matthew 25:14-30. We will focus on what it can teach us about how to find joy and even increase our joy in the blessings we presently have.

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR JOY

⁷ In the parable, a man was about to go on a trip. Before leaving, he called his slaves and gave each of them talents with which to do business.* Taking into consideration their individual abilities, the man gave five talents to one slave, two to another, and one to a third slave. The first two slaves cared for these assets diligently. The third slave, however, did nothing with the money he was given, and he was dismissed from the master's service.

⁸ The first slave must have felt privileged to be entrusted with five of the master's talents. That was a great deal of money, and it indicated the extent of the master's trust in him! But what about the second slave? He could have been discouraged because he did not receive as many talents as the first slave did. But how did he respond?

* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** A talent was the equivalent of about 20 years' wages for an average worker.

7. Briefly summarize Jesus' parable about the talents.
8. Why could the first slave in the parable be joyful?

⁹ Read Matthew 25:22, 23. Jesus did not say that the second slave became upset and resentful because he had received only two talents. And Jesus did not portray the slave as complaining: ‘Is this all I get? Why, I am just as capable as the slave who received five talents! If my master does not appreciate me, I may as well bury these two talents and pursue my own interests.’

9. What did Jesus not say about the second slave? (Matthew 25: 22, 23)

What lessons can we learn from the second slave mentioned in Jesus’ illustration?

(See paragraphs 9-11)



1

He received two talents from his master

2

He worked hard to earn more money for his master



3

He doubled his master’s talents



¹⁰ Like the first slave, the second slave took very seriously the responsibility he had been given and worked hard to serve his master. As a result, he doubled the master's talents. This slave's diligence and skill were richly rewarded. Not only did his master rejoice but he judged the slave worthy of taking on even more responsibility!

¹¹ Similarly, we can increase our joy by becoming *absorbed* in whatever we are given to do in Jehovah's service. Be "intensely occupied" in the preaching work, and be fully involved in congregation activities. (Acts 18:5; Heb. 10:24, 25) Go to the meetings prepared to give upbuilding comments on the material that is being studied. Take seriously any student assignments you have on the midweek meeting. If you are asked to help out with a certain task in the congregation, be punctual and reliable. Do not treat any assignment you are given as if it were unworthy of your time. Strive to improve your skills. (Prov. 22:29) The more absorbed you are in your spiritual activities and assignments, the quicker you will progress and the greater your joy will be. (Gal. 6:4) You will also find it easier to rejoice with others when they receive a privilege that you would have liked to receive.—Rom. 12:15; Gal. 5:26.

10. What did the second slave do with his talents?

11. How can we increase our joy?

¹² Remember Melissa, the sister who expressed her desire to serve at Bethel or attend the School for Kingdom Evangelizers? Although unable to fulfill those desires, she says: “I try to be fully involved in my pioneer ministry and to participate in all of its features. This has brought me great joy.” And how did Nick cope with his disappointment when he was passed over for appointment as a ministerial servant? “I focused on the privileges that were available to me—participating in the field ministry and giving meaningful comments at meetings. I also applied for Bethel service and was accepted the very next year.”

¹³ If you become fully absorbed in your present assignment, will you receive greater responsibilities in the future? That could happen, as it did for Nick. But if not, like Melissa, your joy will still increase, and you will have a great sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. (Read Ecclesiastes 2:24.) Furthermore, you will no doubt find great joy in knowing that your efforts are pleasing to our Master, Jesus Christ.

GOALS THAT ADD TO OUR JOY

¹⁴ Does focusing on our present assignments mean

12. What steps did two Witnesses take to intensify their joy?

13. What will result if you become absorbed in your present assignment? (Ecclesiastes 2:24)

14. With regard to our spiritual goals, what should we keep in mind?

that we should stop looking for ways to expand our service to Jehovah? By no means! We can and should set spiritual goals that help us to keep stretching forward in our efforts to be productive in the ministry and helpful to our brothers and sisters. We succeed when we wisely and modestly focus on serving others instead of ourselves.—Prov. 11:2; Acts 20:35.

¹⁵ What goals might you set for yourself? Ask Jehovah to help you discern what you can realistically hope to accomplish. (Prov. 16:3; Jas. 1:5) Could you pursue one of the goals mentioned in the first paragraph of this article—becoming an auxiliary or a regular pioneer, serving at Bethel, or sharing in theocratic construction projects? Or maybe you are in a position to learn a new language in order to spread the good news or even to preach in a foreign territory. You can learn what is involved by reviewing chapter 10 of the book *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will* and by talking with the elders in your congregation.* As you work toward such goals, your advancement will become manifest and your joy will increase.

* Baptized brothers are encouraged to work toward qualifying as ministerial servants and elders. For a discussion of the qualifications, see chapters 5 and 6 of the book *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*.

15. What are some goals that can help you to increase your joy?

¹⁶ But what if you are presently unable to reach one of the aforementioned goals? The key is to look for another goal, one that you can reasonably attain. Consider the following possibilities.

¹⁷ **Read 1 Timothy 4:13, 15.** If you are a baptized brother, you might work on improving your speaking and teaching ability. Why? Because your getting “absorbed in” reading, speaking, and teaching will be a blessing to your listeners. Try setting the goal of studying and applying each speech quality discussed in the brochure *Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching*. Study one quality at a time, practice diligently at home, and endeavor to manifest that quality in your talk assignments. Seek out suggestions from the auxiliary counselor or other elders “who work hard in speaking and teaching.”* (1 Tim. 5:17) Focus not only on understanding the technique but also on helping your listeners to strengthen their faith or on motivating them to take a certain course of

* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** The **auxiliary counselor** is an elder assigned to give private counsel as needed to elders and ministerial servants regarding any speaking assignments they may handle in the congregation.

16. What can you do if you are presently unable to reach a specific goal?

17. According to 1 Timothy 4:13, 15, how might a brother work toward becoming a better teacher?

What might be some goals that you can reach?
(See paragraphs 17-19)



action. By doing so, you will enhance your joy and theirs.

¹⁸ All of us have the assignment to preach and make disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Rom. 10:14) Would you like to sharpen your skills in this all-important work? Set specific goals as you study and apply what you learn in the *Teaching* brochure. You can obtain additional practical suggestions from the *Our Christian Life and Ministry—Meeting Workbook* and sample conversation videos shown at the midweek meetings. Try a variety of ideas to find out what works best. By following these suggestions, you will surely experience the incomparable joy of becoming a skilled Christian minister.—2 Tim. 4:5.

18. What can help us reach goals in our field ministry?



¹⁹ When considering goals for yourself, do not neglect one of the most important—cultivating Christian qualities. (Gal. 5:22, 23; Col. 3:12; 2 Pet. 1:5-8) How could you proceed? Suppose, for example, that you want to develop stronger faith. You might read articles in our publications that give practical suggestions for strengthening your faith. You would certainly benefit from watching segments of JW Broadcasting[®] that illustrate how brothers and sisters have shown exemplary faith while dealing with various trials. Then consider ways in which you can imitate their faith in your own life.

²⁰ No doubt all of us wish we could do more for

19. How might you develop Christian qualities?

20. How can we add to our joy and reduce disappointment?

Jehovah than we can do at present. In God’s new world, we will be able to serve him to the full. Meanwhile, by taking advantage of whatever opportunities are available to us, we can add to our joy and reduce any feelings of disappointment. Even more important, we will bring honor and praise to Jehovah, our “happy God.” (1 Tim. 1:11) So let us find joy in the privileges we have!

PICTURE DESCRIPTION Pages 48-49: To reach his goal of becoming a better teacher, a brother does research in our publications. After setting the goal of sharing in informal witnessing, a sister offers a contact card to the waitress who served her. Moved by the desire to show Christian qualities, a sister surprises a fellow worshipper with a gift.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- How can Jesus’ illustration of the talents help you find joy in whatever privileges of service you have?
- How can you become a better teacher?
- What other reasonable goals might you set for yourself?

“Taste” Jehovah’s Goodness—How?

“Taste and see that Jehovah is good; happy is the man who takes refuge in him.”—PS. 34:8.

SONG 117

The Quality of Goodness

PREVIEW

Jehovah is the Source of goodness. He provides good things for everyone—even wicked people. But he especially likes to do good things for his faithful worshippers. In this article, we will review how Jehovah expresses his goodness to his servants. We will also examine how those who expand their ministry may experience Jehovah’s goodness in a special way.

IMAGINE being offered something to eat that you have never tried before. You could learn something about it by looking at it, smelling it, getting the recipe, or asking others for their opinion about it. However, the only way to know for sure whether you like it is to taste it for yourself.

² We can learn something about Jehovah's goodness by reading the Bible and our publications as well as by hearing others talk about the blessings they have received from Jehovah. But we will gain a real understanding of how good Jehovah is when we "taste" his goodness for ourselves. (Read Psalm 34:8.) Let us illustrate one way we can do that. Suppose we want to engage in some form of the full-time ministry, but in order to reach that goal, we will need to simplify our life. Perhaps we have often read Jesus' promise that if we put Kingdom interests first, Jehovah will provide the things we really need, but we personally have never experienced the fulfillment of that promise. (Matt. 6:33) Nevertheless, with faith in Jesus' promise, we reduce our expenses, cut down on our secular work, and focus on our ministry. As we do so, we learn through our own experience that Jehovah really does care

1-2. According to Psalm 34:8, how can we learn about Jehovah's goodness?

for our needs. We “taste” Jehovah’s goodness personally.

³ Jehovah is “good to all,” even to those who do not know him. (Ps. 145:9; Matt. 5:45) But especially those who love Jehovah and serve him with their whole soul receive many blessings from him. (Read Psalm 16:1, 2.) Note just some of the ways that we benefit from Jehovah’s goodness.

⁴ Each time we apply what we learn from Jehovah, we see the good effects in our life. As we learned about him and came to love him, he helped us overcome thinking and practices that once separated us from him. (Col. 1:21) And when we dedicated ourselves to Jehovah and got baptized, we experienced his goodness even more as he gave us a good conscience and drew us into a close friendship with him. —1 Pet. 3:21.

⁵ We continue to experience Jehovah’s goodness as we engage in the ministry. Are you a shy person? Many of Jehovah’s people are. Perhaps before you became one of Jehovah’s servants, you could never have imagined yourself knocking on the door of a

3. In line with Psalm 16:1, 2, who receive Jehovah’s goodness?

4. How does Jehovah show his goodness to those who begin to draw close to him?

5. How do we experience Jehovah’s goodness in our ministry?

perfect stranger and sharing an unpopular message with him. Yet, today you do that on a regular basis. What is more, with Jehovah's help, you have learned to enjoy the preaching work! You have felt Jehovah's support in a number of ways. He has helped you to keep calm when faced with an opposer. He has also helped you to recall just the right scripture to share with an interested householder. And he has given you the strength to continue when you have been met with indifference in the territory.—Jer. 20: 7-9.

⁶ Jehovah has also shown us his goodness by training us for the ministry. (John 6:45) At our mid-week meeting, we listen to well-thought-out sample conversations, and we are encouraged to use them in the ministry. At first, we may be a bit apprehensive about trying something new, but when we do, we may find that the new approach appeals to those in our territory. We are also encouraged at meetings and conventions to engage in forms of the ministry that we might never have tried before. Once again, that will mean leaving our comfort zone, but when we do, we give Jehovah something to bless. Let us consider some of the blessings that result when we

6. How is the training that Jehovah provides evidence of his goodness?

explore new ways to give Jehovah our best, regardless of our circumstances. Then let us review ways in which we might expand our ministry.

JEHOVAH BLESSES THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM

⁷ *We draw even closer to Jehovah.* Consider the example of an elder named Samuel,* who serves with his wife in Colombia. This couple enjoyed pioneering in their home congregation, but they wanted to expand their ministry by helping a congregation that had a greater need. To reach that goal, they had to make some sacrifices. “We applied Matthew 6:33 and stopped making unnecessary purchases,” says Samuel. “But the hardest step was leaving our apartment behind. It was designed just for us, and it was mortgage-free.” In their new assignment, the couple found that they were able to live on just one-sixth of their former income. “We have seen how Jehovah guides our steps and answers our prayers,” says Samuel. “We feel his approval and love in ways that we never experienced before.” Are you able to expand your ministry in some way? If so, you can be

* Some of the names have been changed.

7. What blessing do we receive when we endeavor to expand our ministry?

sure that you will draw closer to Jehovah and that he will care for you.—Ps. 18:25.

⁸ *We find joy in our service.* Note the comments from Ivan and Viktoria, a married couple who serve as pioneers in Kyrgyzstan. They kept their life simple so that they could volunteer for any assignment, including construction projects. Ivan says: “We got fully absorbed in each project. Even though we were tired at the end of the day, we had a sense of peace and satisfaction, knowing that we had spent our energy in the Kingdom work. We also found great joy in the friendships and the warm memories we gained.”—Mark 10:29, 30.

⁹ We find joy in Jehovah’s service even when we have challenging circumstances. For example, Mirreh, an elderly widow in West Africa, retired from working at her medical practice and started pioneering. Mirreh has advanced arthritis and can only spend an hour at a time in the house-to-house ministry. But she is able to spend more time in public witnessing. She has many return visits and Bible studies, some of whom she contacts by telephone.

8. What do you learn from the comments made by Ivan and Viktoria?

9. What has a sister with challenging circumstances done to expand her ministry, and with what result?

What motivated Mirreh to reach out? “My heart overflows with love for Jehovah and Christ Jesus. And I frequently pray that Jehovah help me to do as much as I can in his service.”—Matt. 22:36, 37.

¹⁰ *We receive additional training from Jehovah.* Kenny, a pioneer who serves in Mauritius, found this to be true. When he learned the truth, he left university, got baptized, and entered the full-time ministry. He says, “I try to live by the words of the prophet Isaiah, who said: ‘Here I am! Send me!’” (Isa. 6:8) Kenny has worked on a number of construction projects, and he has also helped to translate Bible-based publications into his mother tongue. “I received training that taught me the skills I needed to accomplish my assignments,” says Kenny. But he learned more than just technical information. He adds, “I learned about my limitations and the qualities I need to develop to become a better servant of Jehovah.” (Read 1 Peter 5:10.) Why not examine your circumstances and see if you can make yourself available to receive additional training from Jehovah?

¹¹ Even experienced Witnesses benefit from

10. As shown at 1 Peter 5:10, what do those who reach out receive from Jehovah?

11. What efforts did sisters in South Korea make in order to engage in the ministry, and with what result? (See cover picture.)

training when they try a new form of service. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the elders in a congregation in South Korea wrote: “Some who once thought they could not participate in field service because of their health now do so through videoconferencing. Three sisters in their 80’s learned the new technology and began to share in the arrangement almost every day.” (Ps. 92:14, 15) Would you like to expand your ministry and taste Jehovah’s goodness even more? Consider some steps you can take that will help you reach that goal.

HOW YOU CAN REACH OUT

¹² *Learn to rely on Jehovah.* He promises to shower us with blessings when we trust in him and give him our best. (Mal. 3:10) A sister in Colombia named Fabiola saw Jehovah fulfill this promise in her case. She wanted to serve as a regular pioneer soon after she got baptized. However, her husband and three children relied on her income. So when she was eligible to retire, she prayed intensely to Jehovah for help. She says: “It normally takes a long time to process a pension, but mine was approved just one month after I had applied for it. It was like a miracle!” Two months later she enrolled as a pioneer. She

12. What does Jehovah promise to those who rely on him?

is now in her 70's and has been pioneering for over 20 years. During that time, she has helped eight people to the point of baptism. She says: "Although I feel weak at times, Jehovah helps me every day to keep my schedule."

¹³ *Benefit from the examples of those who relied on Jehovah.* The Bible is filled with examples of individuals who exerted themselves in Jehovah's service. In many instances, those servants of Jehovah had to take the first step before they received special blessings from Jehovah. For example, it was only after Abraham left his home—"although not knowing

13-14. What examples can help us to trust in Jehovah and to reach out?



How did Abraham and Sarah, Jacob, and the priests who crossed the Jordan River show trust in Jehovah?

(See paragraph 13)



where he was going”—that Jehovah blessed him. (Heb. 11:8) It was only after Jacob wrestled with the angel that he received a special blessing. (Gen. 32:24-30) When the nation of Israel was about to enter the Promised Land, it was only after the priests stepped into the raging Jordan River that the people were able to cross over.—Josh. 3:14-16.

¹⁴ You can also benefit from the examples of modern-day Witnesses who have relied on Jehovah and reached out. For instance, a brother named Payton and his wife, Diana, enjoyed reading about brothers and sisters who had expanded their service to Jehovah, such as those described in the series “They Offered Themselves Willingly.”* Payton says: “When we read their experiences, we felt as if we were watching someone enjoy a delicious meal. The longer we watched, the more we wanted to ‘taste and see that Jehovah is good.’” Eventually, Payton and Diana moved to serve where the need was greater. Have you read this series? And have you watched the videos *Witnessing in Isolated Territory—Australia* and *Witnessing in Isolated Territory—Ireland* that are published on jw.org? This material may help you to look for ways that you can expand your service.

* This series, previously published in *The Watchtower*, now appears on jw.org. Go to ABOUT US > EXPERIENCES > REACHING SPIRITUAL GOALS.

¹⁵ ***Choose the right association.*** We are more inclined to try a new dish if we spend time with those who enjoy it. Similarly, if we associate with those who build their life around serving Jehovah, we are more likely to look for ways to expand our service to God. A couple named Kent and Veronica found that to be true. “Our friends and family encouraged us to try new avenues of service,” says Kent. “We realized that by associating with those who seek the Kingdom first, we gained the confidence to try something new.” Kent and Veronica now serve as special pioneers in Serbia.

¹⁶ ***Make sacrifices for Jehovah.*** We do not need to give up all comforts in order to please Jehovah. (Eccl. 5:19, 20) However, if we were to hold back from doing more in God’s service just to avoid making personal sacrifices, we could make the same mistake as the man in Jesus’ illustration who created a comfortable life for himself but ignored God. (Read **Luke 12:16-21.**) A brother named Christian, who lives in France, says, “I was not giving the best of my time and energy to Jehovah and my family.” He and his wife decided to pioneer. But to reach that goal,

15. How can the right association help us?

16. As shown by Jesus’ illustration found at Luke 12:16-21, why should we be willing to make sacrifices?

they had to leave their jobs. To support themselves, they started a small cleaning business, and they learned to be content with less. Was the sacrifice worth making? Christian says, “We enjoy a more meaningful ministry now and enjoy seeing Bible students and return visits learn about Jehovah.”

¹⁷ *Be willing to try new types of service.* (Acts 17:16, 17; 20:20, 21) Shirley, a pioneer in the United States, had to adjust her ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic. At first, she hesitated to try telephone witnessing. Once she received training during the visit of the circuit overseer, though, she began regularly sharing in this form of witnessing. She says: “In the beginning, it was scary, but now I really enjoy it. We’re reaching more people than we did in the house-to-house work!”

¹⁸ *Make a plan and act.* When we face challenges, we prayerfully do our best to use our thinking ability to come up with a plan of action. (Prov. 3:21) Sonia, who serves as a regular pioneer with a Romany-language group in Europe, says: “I like to write my plans down on paper and keep that paper somewhere visible. I have a drawing of a traffic intersection on

17. What might keep us from trying something new in our ministry?

18. What can help us to face challenges as we try to expand our ministry?

my dresser. When I have a decision to make, I look at that intersection and think about which direction my decision will take me.” Sonia tries to keep a positive view of the challenges she faces. “Each new circumstance,” she says, “can be like a wall that blocks me or a bridge that helps me—it depends on my attitude.”

¹⁹ Jehovah blesses us in many ways. We can show how much we appreciate those blessings by doing all we can to bring him praise. (Heb. 13:15) That may include exploring new ways to expand our ministry, putting us in line for additional blessings. Each day, let us look for ways to “taste and see that Jehovah is good.” Then we will be like Jesus, who said: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”—John 4:34.

19. What should be our resolve?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

- What must we do in order to experience Jehovah’s goodness in a special way?
- How does Jehovah show his goodness to those who reach out?
- What can help us to reach out in Jehovah’s service?

SONG 80

“Taste and See That Jehovah Is Good”

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COVER PICTURE:

A couple preach in an area where there is a greater need for Kingdom publishers; a young sister helps with the construction of a Kingdom Hall; an elderly couple share in telephone witnessing. All of them derive much joy from their ministry (See study article 34, paragraph 11)

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