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SONG 73

Grant Us Boldness

PREVIEW

Young servants of Jehovah today face challenges that test their courage and their loyalty to Jehovah. Their classmates may mock them for believing in creation. Or their peers may try to make them feel foolish for serving God and living by his standards. But as this article will show, those who imitate the prophet Daniel and who serve Jehovah with courage and loyalty are truly wise.

Learn From Daniel's Example

"You are someone very precious."—DAN. 9:23.

THE prophet Daniel was a young man when the Babylonians made him a prisoner of war and dragged him far away from his homeland. But Daniel obviously impressed his captors. They saw "what appear[ed] to the eyes"—that Daniel was "without any defect, of good appearance" and that he came from an influential family. (1 Sam. 16:7) For those reasons, the Babylonians trained him to become an elite member of their society.—Dan. 1: 3, 4, 6.

² Jehovah loved Daniel, not because of his physical appearance or his social status, but because of the type of person that this young man chose to be. In fact, Daniel may have been only in his late teens or early 20's when Jehovah mentioned him favorably together with Noah and Job, men who had spent many decades building a good reputation with God. (Gen. 5:32; 6:9, 10; Job 42:16, 17; **read Ezekiel 14:14.**) And Jehovah continued to love Daniel throughout his long and remarkable life.—Dan. 10:11, 19.

³ In this article, we will examine two of Daniel's qualities that made him precious to Jehovah. First, we will describe each quality and review occasions when he showed it. Next, we will see what helped Daniel to develop these qualities. Finally, we will discuss how we can imitate him. Although this article is written with young ones in mind, all of us can learn from Daniel's example.

1. Why were the Babylonians impressed by the prophet Daniel?
2. How did Jehovah feel about Daniel? (Ezekiel 14:14)
3. What will we consider in this article?



Daniel developed courage by studying and praying and by trusting in Jehovah (See paragraph 7)

IMITATE DANIEL'S COURAGE

⁴ Courageous people may experience fear, but they do not allow it to stop them from doing what is right. Daniel was a very courageous young man. Consider two occasions on which he showed courage. The first likely happened about two years after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a disturbing dream about an immense image. He threatened to kill all his wise men, including Daniel, if they could not tell him what he had dreamed and also give the interpretation. (Dan. 2:3-5) Daniel had to act quickly; otherwise, lives would be lost. He “went in and asked the king to grant him time to tell the interpretation to the king.” (Dan. 2:16) That took courage and faith. There is no record that Daniel had ever interpreted dreams before. He asked his companions—whose Babylonian names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—“to pray for mercy from

4. How did Daniel show courage? Give an example.

the God of heaven concerning this secret.” (Dan. 2:18) Jehovah answered those prayers. With God’s help, Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Daniel’s life and the lives of his companions were spared.

⁵ Some time after Daniel interpreted the dream about the immense image, his courage was tested again. Nebuchadnezzar had another troubling dream. This dream involved a gigantic tree. Daniel courageously explained to the king the meaning of the dream, including the pronouncement that the king would go mad and lose his throne for a period of time. (Dan. 4:25) The king could easily have viewed that message as seditious and could have put Daniel to death. But Daniel showed courage and delivered it anyway.

⁶ What may have helped Daniel to be courageous throughout his life? While young, Daniel surely learned from the

5. What further test of courage did Daniel face?

6. What may have helped Daniel to be courageous?

example of his mother and father. No doubt they obeyed the instructions that Jehovah had given to Israelite parents, and they taught God's Law to their child. (Deut. 6:6-9) Daniel knew not only the basics of the Law, such as the Ten Commandments, but also the details regarding what an Israelite could and could not eat.* (Lev. 11:4-8; Dan. 1:8, 11-13) Daniel also learned the history of God's people and knew what happened to them when they failed to live by Jehovah's standards. (Dan. 9:10, 11) Experiences throughout Daniel's life made him confident that Jehovah and His powerful angels were supporting him.—Dan. 2:19-24; 10:12, 18, 19.

⁷ Daniel studied the writings of God's prophets, including the prophecies of Jeremiah. From that study, Daniel later discerned that the long captivity of the Jews in Babylon was soon to end. (Dan. 9:2) Seeing Bible prophecy come true no doubt strengthened Daniel's trust in Jehovah, and those who have strong trust in God can be remarkably courageous. (Compare Romans 8:31, 32, 37-39.) Most important, Daniel prayed to his heavenly Father often. (Dan. 6:10) He confessed his sins to Jehovah and shared his feelings with Him. And Daniel asked for help. (Dan. 9:4, 5, 19) He was a human like us, so he was not born with

* Daniel had three possible reasons for considering the Babylonian food to be unclean: (1) The meat may have come from animals prohibited by the Law. (Deut. 14:7, 8) (2) The meat may not have been properly bled. (Lev. 17:10-12) (3) Eating the food could have been viewed as part of the worship of a false god.—Compare Leviticus 7:15 and 1 Corinthians 10:18, 21, 22.

7. What else helped Daniel to have courage? (See also picture.)

courage. Instead, he developed that quality through study and prayer and by trusting in Jehovah.

⁸ To develop courage, what do we need to do? Our parents may urge us to be courageous, but they cannot pass this quality on to us as if it were a family heirloom. Gaining courage is like learning a new skill. One way you can master the skill is by closely watching the instructor's actions and then copying his example. In a similar way, we learn to be courageous by closely looking at how others show this quality and then copying their example. So, what have we learned from Daniel? Like him, we need to know God's Word well. We must form a close bond with Jehovah by talking to him freely and often. And we need to trust in Jehovah, being convinced that we have his backing. Then when our faith is tested, we will be courageous.

⁹ We benefit in a number of ways from being courageous. Consider the experience of Ben. He attended a school in Germany where everyone believed in evolution and felt that the creation account in the Bible is a myth. One day, Ben was given the opportunity to stand in front of the class and explain why he believed that life was created. He courageously presented his beliefs. With what result? "My teacher listened carefully," says Ben, "and he made copies of the material that I used to support my argument and gave one to every student in the class." How did Ben's classmates react? "Many of them were open-

8. How can we develop courage?

9. How do we benefit from being courageous?

minded,” says Ben, “and they said that they admired me.” As Ben’s experience shows, courageous people often gain the respect of others. They may also attract honesthearted people to Jehovah. Certainly, we have good reasons to develop courage.

IMITATE DANIEL’S LOYALTY

¹⁰ In the Bible, the Hebrew word for “loyalty,” or “loyal love,” conveys the idea of a warm and loving attachment that is often used to describe the love that God has for his servants. The same word is also used to describe the love shown among God’s servants. (2 Sam. 9:6, 7) Our loyalty can become stronger over time. Consider how this proved true for Daniel.

¹¹ Daniel’s loyalty to Jehovah was tested throughout his life. But one of the greatest tests came when he was in his 90’s. By this time, Babylon had been

captured by the Medes and the Persians and was ruled by King Darius. Members of the royal court disliked Daniel and had little respect for the God he worshipped. So they devised a plot to have Daniel killed. They had a decree issued that would test whether Daniel would be loyal to his God or to the king. All Daniel had to do to prove his loyalty to the king and to blend in with everyone else was stop praying to Jehovah for 30 days. Daniel refused to compromise. As a result, he was thrown into the lions’ pit. But Jehovah rewarded Daniel’s loyalty by rescuing him from the mouth of the lions. (Dan. 6:12-15, 20-22) How can we develop the kind of unbreakable loyalty to Jehovah that Daniel showed?

¹² As mentioned earlier, loyalty is motivated by strong love. Daniel’s loyalty to Jehovah was unbreakable because he dearly loved his heavenly Father. Daniel undoubtedly developed that love by thinking about Jehovah’s qualities

10. What is loyalty?

11. What test of loyalty did Daniel face in his old age? (See cover picture.)

12. How did Daniel develop unbreakable loyalty to Jehovah?



Like Daniel, you can develop unbreakable loyalty to Jehovah by loving Him dearly
(See paragraph 13)

and reflecting on the way He showed them. (Dan. 9:4) Daniel also meditated gratefully on all the good things that Jehovah had done for him and His people.—Dan. 2:20-23; 9:15, 16.

¹³ Like Daniel, our young ones are surrounded by people who have no respect for Jehovah and his standards. Such people may dislike anyone who claims to love God. Some even try to bully our young ones into breaking their loyalty to Jehovah. Note, for example, what happened to a young man named Graeme, who lives in Australia. He faced a challenging situation when he attended high school. The teacher asked the class how they would react if a friend confided in them about being a homosexual. The teacher said that all in the class who would support a friend in pursuing such a lifestyle must stand on one side of the room; those who would not, on the other side. Graeme says, “The entire class stood on the side that supported that lifestyle except for me and another Witness.” What happened next was a real test of Graeme’s loyalty to Jehovah. “For the rest of the hour-long class,” he says, “the other students and even the teacher taunted and insulted us. I did my best to defend my faith in a calm and reasonable way, but they didn’t listen to a word I said.” What effect did this test of loyalty have on Graeme? He says, “I did not like being the target of such verbal attacks, but I felt incredibly happy

13. (a) What tests of loyalty do our young ones face? Give an example. (See also picture.) (b) As shown in the video, how might you respond when others ask if Jehovah’s Witnesses support those who choose to pursue a homosexual lifestyle?

that I was able to defend my beliefs without compromise.”*

¹⁴ We can develop unbreakable loyalty to Jehovah if, like Daniel, we form a deep love for Him. We develop that love by learning about Jehovah’s qualities. For example, we can study the things he has made. (Rom. 1:20) If you would like to deepen your love and respect for Jehovah, you could read the brief articles in the series “Was It Designed?” or watch the videos. You could also go over the material in the brochures *Was Life Created?* and *The Origin of Life—Five Questions Worth Asking*. Note what a young Danish sister named Esther says about those publications: “The reasoning is fantastic. The brochures don’t tell you what to believe; they simply present the facts and let you make a decision.” Ben, quoted earlier, says: “This material was very faith-strengthening. It proved to me that God created life.” After studying this material, you will likely agree with the Bible when it says: “You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things.”—Rev. 4:11.[#]

¹⁵ Another way to develop a deep love for Jehovah is by closely examining the life of his Son, Jesus. A young sister named Samira, who lives in Germa-

* Watch on jw.org the video “The Result of True Righteousness Will Be Peace.”

[#] To strengthen your love for Jehovah, you could also study the book *Draw Close to Jehovah*, which contains an in-depth discussion of Jehovah’s qualities and personality.

14. What is one way that we can develop unbreakable loyalty to Jehovah?

15. What is another way that we can develop a close bond with Jehovah?

ny, did this. She says: “I came to know Jehovah better through Jesus.” When she was a child, Samira struggled to understand how Jehovah could have feelings. But she could relate to Jesus. “I liked Jesus because he was friendly and loved children,” she adds. The more she learned about Jesus, the more she formed a bond with Jehovah. Why? She says: “I slowly understood that Jesus perfectly imitates his Father. They are a lot alike. I realized that this was one of the reasons why Jehovah sent Jesus to the earth, to make it possible for mankind to get to know Jehovah better.” (John 14:9) If you want to strengthen your bond with Jehovah, why not spend time learning all you can about Jesus? If you do, your love for Jehovah and your loyalty to him will grow.

¹⁶ Those who are loyal often form close and lasting friendships. (Ruth 1:14-17) In addition, people who are loyal to Jehovah have good reason to feel a sense of inner peace. Why? Because Jehovah promises to be loyal to those who are loyal to him. **(Read Psalm 18:25; Micah**

16. How do we benefit from being loyal? (Psalm 18:25; Micah 6:8)

6:8.) Just think—the almighty Creator is willing to form a strong emotional bond with us! And when he does, no trial, no opposer, not even death itself can break that bond. (Dan. 12:13; Luke 20:37, 38; Rom. 8:38, 39) How important it is that we imitate Daniel and remain loyal to Jehovah!

CONTINUE TO LEARN FROM DANIEL

¹⁷ In this article, we have examined just two of Daniel’s qualities. But there is much more that we can learn from him. For example, Jehovah gave Daniel a series of visions and dreams, and He gave him the ability to interpret prophetic messages. Many of those prophecies have already been fulfilled. Others provide details about future events that will affect every person on earth.

¹⁸ In the next article, we will take a look at two prophecies recorded by Daniel. Understanding them can help all of us, young and old, to make wise decisions now. Those prophecies can also strengthen our courage and our loyalty so that we are prepared to face the tests that are just ahead.

17-18. What else can we learn from Daniel?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

- Why did Jehovah love Daniel?
- How did Daniel show courage?
- How can we develop loyalty to Jehovah?

SONG 98

The Scriptures
—Inspired of God

PREVIEW

No matter how bad the situation in the world becomes, we can have confidence that a happy future awaits us. We gain that confidence by studying Bible prophecy. This article will discuss specific reasons why we should study what the Bible foretells. We will also briefly examine two of the prophecies recorded by Daniel and see how we personally can benefit when we understand them.

Learn From Bible Prophecy

“Those having insight will understand.”—DAN. 12:10.

“I LOVE studying Bible prophecy,” says a young brother named Ben. Do you agree with him? Or are you a little intimidated by prophecy? You may even feel that studying prophecies can be boring. However, when you learn more about why Jehovah had them included in his Word, you may change your opinion.

² In this article, we will discuss not only *why* we should learn about Bible prophecies but also *how* we can study them. We will then examine two prophecies in the book of Daniel to see how understanding them can help us now.

WHY STUDY BIBLE PROPHECY?

³ We need to ask for help if we are to understand Bible prophecy. Consider this illustration. Imagine that you are visiting an unfamiliar place but a friend who is traveling with you is well-acquainted with the area. He knows exactly where you are and where each road leads. No doubt you would be glad that your friend agreed to come with you! In a similar way, Jehovah knows where we are in the stream of time and what is on the road ahead of us. So to understand Bible prophecy, we must humbly ask for Jehovah’s help.—Dan. 2:28; 2 Pet. 1:19, 20.

⁴ Like any good parent, Jehovah wants his children to have a happy future. **(Read Jeremiah 29:11.)** But un-

1. What can help us to learn to enjoy studying Bible prophecy?
2. On what will this article focus?
3. What do we need to do if we are to understand Bible prophecy?
4. Why did Jehovah have prophecies recorded in his Word? (Jeremiah 29:11) (See also picture.)

like any human parent, Jehovah can foretell the future with complete accuracy. He had prophecies recorded in his Word so that we can know about important events before they happen. (Isa. 46:10) Bible prophecies are loving gifts from our heavenly Father. But how can you be certain that what the Bible foretells really will come true?

⁵ At school, our young ones are often surrounded by those who have little or no respect for the Bible. Their comments and conduct can raise doubts in the mind of a young Witness. Note the experience of a brother named Max. He says, “When I was in my teens, I started to doubt that my parents were teaching me the true religion and that the Bible was inspired by God.” What did his parents do? He says, “They reacted calmly, even though I know they were worried.” Max’s parents answered his questions from the Bible. Max did something too. “I studied Bible prophecy for myself,” he says, “and I discussed what I learned with other young ones.” With what result? Max says, “After that, I was convinced that the Bible is inspired by God!”

⁶ If, like Max, you begin to doubt that the Bible contains the truth, you do not need to feel guilty. But you do need to do something about it. Doubt is like rust. If ignored, it can slowly destroy something valuable. To begin removing any “rust” from your faith, you need to ask yourself, ‘Do I believe what the Bi-

5. What can a young person learn from Max’s experience?

6. What do you need to do if you have doubts, and why?



Studying Bible prophecy can help us to prepare for future events

(See paragraph 4)

ble says about the future?’ If you are not sure, then you need to study Bible prophecies that have already come true. How can you go about doing that?

HOW TO STUDY BIBLE PROPHECY

⁷ Daniel set a good example with regard to how to study prophecy. He approached prophecy with the **right motive**, to know the truth. Daniel was also **humble**, recognizing that Jehovah will give understanding to those who know him and who live by his clean standards. (Dan. 2:27, 28; **read Daniel 12:10.**) Daniel proved that he was humble by relying on Jehovah for help. (Dan. 2:18) Daniel was also **thorough**. He researched the inspired Scriptures that were available to him. (Jer. 25:11, 12; Dan. 9:2) How can you imitate Daniel?

⁸ **Examine your motives.** Is your study of Bible prophecy motivated by a strong desire to know the truth? If it is, Jehovah will help you. (John 4:23, 24; 14:

7. What example did Daniel set with regard to how to study prophecy? (Daniel 12:10) (See also picture.)

8. Why do some refuse to believe that Bible prophecies come true, but what should we do?



To develop trust in Jehovah as Daniel did, we must study Bible prophecy humbly, thoroughly, and with the right motive

(See paragraph 7)

16, 17) Why else might someone study prophecy? Some may do so in hopes of finding evidence that the Bible is not inspired by God. In that way, they feel that they can justify setting their own standards of right and wrong and living by those standards. However, we need to have the proper motivation. In addition, an important quality is needed to understand Bible prophecy.

⁹ **Be humble.** Jehovah promises to help the humble. (Jas. 4:6) So we need to pray for His help to understand Bible prophecy. We must also acknowledge that we need the help of the channel he is using to give us our spiritual food at the proper time. (Luke 12:42) Jehovah is a God of order, so it makes sense that he would use just one channel to help us understand the truths contained in his Word.—1 Cor. 14:33; Eph. 4:4-6.

¹⁰ **Be thorough.** Pick a prophecy that interests you and research that one first. That is what a sister named Es-

9. What quality is needed to understand Bible prophecy? Explain.

10. What do you learn from Esther's experience?

ther did. She was interested in prophecies that foretold the coming of the Messiah. "When I was 15," she says, "I began digging for proof that these prophecies were actually written before Jesus' time." What she learned from reading about the Dead Sea Scrolls convinced her. "Some of them were written before the time of Christ," she notes, "so the prophecies they contained had to be from God." Esther admits, "I had to read things several times to understand them." But she is happy she made the effort. After thoroughly studying a number of Bible prophecies, she says, "I could clearly see for myself that the Bible is true!"

¹¹ When we see how some prophecies in God's Word have already been fulfilled, we develop an unbreakable trust in Jehovah and in the way that he is guiding us. In addition, Bible prophecies help us to maintain a positive hope for the future, no matter what trials we face now. Let us briefly consider two prophecies recorded by Daniel that are now being fulfilled. Understanding them can help us to make wise decisions.

HOW DO THE FEET OF IRON AND CLAY AFFECT YOU?

¹² **Read Daniel 2:41-43.** In the dream that Daniel interpreted for King Nebuchadnezzar, the feet of the image that the king saw were made of "iron mixed with soft clay." By comparing this prophecy with others in the books of Daniel

11. How do we benefit from proving to ourselves that the Bible is true?

12. What do the feet of "iron mixed with soft clay" represent? (Daniel 2:41-43)

and Revelation, we can conclude that the feet represent the Anglo-American alliance, the dominant world power today. Regarding this world power, Daniel says that “the kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile.” Why partly fragile? Because the common people, pictured by the soft clay, undermine its ability to act with ironlike strength.*

¹³ From Daniel’s description of the dream image and particularly its feet, we learn several important truths. First, the Anglo-American World Power has shown its strength in some ways. For example, it played a key role in winning World War I and World War II. However, this world power has been weakened and will continue to be weakened by internal conflicts among its own citizens. Second, this alliance will be the last world power to rule before God’s Kingdom puts an end to all human kingdoms. Even though other nations may at times challenge the Anglo-American World Power, they will not replace it. We know that because “the stone” representing God’s Kingdom will crush the feet, the part of the image that depicts the Anglo-American alliance.—Dan. 2: 34, 35, 44, 45.

¹⁴ Are you convinced that Daniel’s prophecy regarding the feet of iron and clay is true? If so, that will affect

* See the article “Jehovah Reveals What ‘Must Shortly Take Place,’” pars. 7-9, in the June 15, 2012, issue of *The Watchtower*.

13. What important truths can we grasp because we understand this prophecy?

14. How can understanding the prophecy about the feet of iron and clay help us to make wise decisions?

the way you live your life. You will not seek material security in a world that will soon be crushed out of existence. (Luke 12:16-21; 1 John 2:15-17) Understanding this prophecy will also help you see the importance of the preaching and teaching work. (Matt. 6:33; 28:18-20) After studying this prophecy, why not ask yourself this question, ‘Do the decisions I make show that I am convinced that God’s Kingdom will soon put an end to all human governments?’

HOW DO “THE KING OF THE NORTH” AND “THE KING OF THE SOUTH” AFFECT YOU?

¹⁵ **Read Daniel 11:40.** Daniel chapter 11 speaks of two kings, or political powers, who struggle with each other for world domination. By comparing this prophecy with others in the Bible, we can identify “the king of the north” as Russia and its allies and “the king of the south” as the Anglo-American World Power.*

¹⁶ God’s people who live under the rule of “the king of the north” are enduring direct persecution by this king. Some Witnesses have been beaten and thrown into prison for their faith. Rather than intimidate our brothers, the actions of “the king of the north” build their faith. Why? Because our brothers know that the persecution of God’s people fulfills prophetic statements made

* See the article “Who Is ‘the King of the North’ Today?,” pars. 3-4, in the May 2020 issue of *The Watchtower*.

15. Who are “the king of the north” and “the king of the south” today? (Daniel 11:40)

16. What challenges do those who live in the realm of “the king of the north” face?



We can strengthen our faith and avoid undue anxiety if we realize that opposition from “the king of the north” and “the king of the south” fulfills Bible prophecy

(See paragraphs 16-18)

by Daniel.* (Dan. 11:41) Our knowing that can help us to keep our hope strong and our integrity intact.

¹⁷ In the past, “the king of the south” has also made direct attacks on Jehovah’s people. During the first half of the 20th century, for example, many brothers were imprisoned because of their

* See the article “Who Is ‘the King of the North’ Today?,” pars. 7-9, in the May 2020 issue of *The Watchtower*.

17. What challenges have God’s people faced under the rule of “the king of the south”?

Christian neutrality and some Witness children were expelled from school for the same reason. In recent decades, though, Jehovah’s servants living in the realm of that king have faced more subtle tests of their loyalty to God’s Kingdom. For instance, during election campaigns, a Christian might feel tempted to support one political party or candidate over another. He may not go so far as to vote; but in his mind and heart, he takes sides. How important it is that

we remain politically neutral not only in our actions but also in our thoughts and feelings!—John 15:18, 19; 18:36.

¹⁸ Those who do not have faith in Bible prophecy may become extremely anxious when they see “the king of the south” “lock horns” with “the king of the north.” (Dan. 11:40, ftn.) Both kings have enough nuclear firepower to destroy all life on earth. But we know that Jehovah will not allow that to happen. (Isa. 45:18) So rather than trouble us, the hostility between “the king of the north” and “the king of the south” strengthens our faith. It confirms that the end of this system is near.

CONTINUE TO PAY ATTENTION TO PROPHECY

¹⁹ We do not know how some Bible prophecies will be fulfilled. Even the prophet Daniel did not understand the

18. How do we react to the conflict between “the king of the north” and its rival? (See also picture.)

19. What should we acknowledge about Bible prophecy?

meaning of everything he wrote down. (Dan. 12:8, 9) But just because we do not fully comprehend how a prophecy will be fulfilled does not mean that it will not come true. Without a doubt, we can trust that Jehovah will reveal to us what we need to know at exactly the right time, just as he did in the past.—Amos 3:7.

²⁰ A proclamation of “peace and security” will be made. (1 Thess. 5:3) Then the world’s political powers will turn on false religion and wipe it out. (Rev. 17:16, 17) They will then attack God’s people. (Ezek. 38:18, 19) These events will lead directly to the final war of Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14, 16) We can be certain that these events will shortly take place. Until then, let us continue to show our appreciation to our loving heavenly Father by paying attention to Bible prophecy and by helping others to do the same.

20. What exciting Bible prophecies will we soon see fulfilled, and what should we continue to do?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

- Why should we study Bible prophecy?
- How should we study Bible prophecy?
- What are some of the prophecies involving the Anglo-American World Power and Russia and its allies that we have seen fulfilled?



When a Marriage Mate Views Pornography

- *“I felt as if my husband had repeatedly committed adultery.”*
- *“I felt humiliated, unattractive, and worthless.”*
- *“I could not talk to anyone about it. I suffered in silence.”*
- *“I felt as if Jehovah didn’t care about me.”*

The above expressions show how much a wife suffers when her husband views pornography. And if he has been doing so in secret, perhaps for months or years, she may feel that she cannot trust him anymore. As one wife said, “I wondered: ‘Who is this man beside me? Are there other things he is hiding from me?’”

This article has been prepared for a wife whose husband has succumbed to pornography.* It will discuss Bible principles that

* For simplicity, we will speak of the husband as the one who is viewing pornography. However, many of the principles discussed in this article will benefit a husband whose wife views pornography.

provide comfort, assure her of Jehovah’s support, and help her to recover emotionally and spiritually.*

WHAT CAN AN INNOCENT MATE DO?

Although you cannot control everything your husband does, you can take steps to lessen your anguish and to experience greater peace of mind. Consider the following.

Avoid self-blame. A wife might feel that her husband’s use of pornography is somehow her fault. Alice[#] felt that she must be deficient as a woman. She wondered, ‘Why does my husband prefer to look at other women instead of me?’ Some wives blame themselves for their reaction, thinking that they are making the situation worse. Danielle says, “I saw myself as a bitter woman who was destroying our marriage by my anger.”

If you feel similarly, know that Jehovah does not hold you responsible for your husband’s actions. James 1:14 states: “Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by **his own** desire.” (Rom. 14:12; Phil. 2:12)

* Viewing pornography does not provide grounds for a Scriptural divorce.—Matt. 19:9.

[#] Names have been changed.

Instead of blaming you, Jehovah values your loyalty to him.—2 Chron. 16:9.

It may also be helpful to understand that a husband's use of pornography does not mean that his wife is deficient as a woman. Experts on the subject point out that pornography creates insatiable cravings for fantasy that no woman can satisfy.

Avoid excessive worry. Catherine said that obsessing over her husband's use of pornography consumed her entire life. Frances said: "I get anxious whenever I lose track of where my husband is. I'm a nervous wreck all day." Other wives have revealed how embarrassed they feel in the presence of fellow Christians who might know of their husband's problem. Still others have admitted how isolated they feel because they think that nobody understands their situation.

These feelings are natural. Yet, dwelling on them will only increase your apprehension. Instead, try to focus on your relationship with Jehovah. Doing so will help

you build inner strength.—Ps. 62:2; Eph. 6:10.

You might find it helpful to read about and meditate on Bible accounts of troubled women who found comfort by turning to Jehovah in prayer. He did not always reverse their circumstances, but he gave them peace. Hannah, for example, had been "extremely bitter" over her situation. But after she "prayed for a long time before Jehovah," she experienced peace, even though she did not yet know how her situation would turn out.—1 Sam. 1:10, 12, 18; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

Seek support from congregation elders. They can be "a shelter from the wind, a refuge from the rainstorm." (Isa. 32:2, ftns.) They may even be able to recommend a sister in whom you can confide and find comfort.—Prov. 17:17.

CAN YOU HELP HIM?

Might you be able to help your husband overcome his habit of viewing pornography? Perhaps. The Bible points out that in

Both husband and wife may need to seek help from the elders



How Can Elders Help?

- If the wife is willing, arrange to speak with both mates regularly. Give her the opportunity to express herself openly. —Isa. 32:1, 2; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.
- Understand the enslaving nature of pornography, and be mindful of what it takes to stay free from it.
- Even after the problem seems to have passed, be aware that ongoing help will likely be needed.
- Be careful not to make excuses for the husband's conduct or to imply that the wife is somehow to blame.
- Encourage the wife to see herself as Jehovah sees her and to keep feeding herself spiritually through personal study and prayer.
- Assure the wife that she is loved, respected, and valued by Jehovah, the body of elders, and the congregation.

solving a problem or in conquering a formidable enemy, “two are better than one.” (Eccl. 4:9-12) Studies show that results are often good when a couple work together to overcome an addiction to pornography and to restore trust in their marriage.

Of course, much will depend on whether your mate is earnest and determined to overcome his inclination to view pornography. Has he supplicated Jehovah for strength and sought help from the elders? (2 Cor. 4:7; Jas. 5:14, 15) Has he developed strategies that keep him away from temptation—for example, restricting his use of

electronic devices and avoiding high-risk situations? (Prov. 27:12) Is he willing to accept your help and to be completely honest with you? If so, you may be able to help him.

How? Consider an example. Felicia married Ethan, who had become addicted to pornography in his early childhood. Felicia makes it easy for him to talk to her about his recurring urges to return to pornography. Ethan explains: “I talk honestly and openly with my wife. She lovingly helps me put up boundaries and checks on me regularly. And she helps me limit access to the Internet.” Naturally, Felicia feels hurt by Ethan's attraction to pornography. “But,” she says, “my feelings of anger and pain do not help him remain free from this vice. After we analyze his issues, he is ready to work with me through my own pain.”

Such discussions can not only help a husband to remain free from pornography but also help his wife to trust him again. After all, when a husband is willing to be open about his tendencies, daily activities, and whereabouts, all secrecy is removed.

Do you believe that you can help your husband in a similar way? If so, why not read and discuss this article together? His goals will be to quit pornography and to give you a basis to trust him. Rather than resent your concerns, he should endeavor to understand how the problem affects you. Your goals are to reinforce his efforts and to allow him the opportunity to restore your trust. You will both need to learn what causes people to succumb to pornography and how the problem can be overcome.*

If you fear that your conversations will get heated, consider asking an elder with

* Helpful information can be found on jw.org and in our publications. For example, see “Pornography Can Shatter Your Marriage” on jw.org; “You Can Resist Temptation!” in *The Watchtower*, April 1, 2014, pp. 10-12; and “Pornography—Harmless or Toxic?” in *The Watchtower*, August 1, 2013, pp. 3-7.

whom you are both comfortable to sit in and guide your discussions for a time. Be aware that even after a marriage mate has overcome an addiction to pornography, it may take considerable time to restore trust. Do not give up. Look for small improvements in your relationship. Expect that with time and patience, your marriage will eventually become strong again.—Eccl. 7:8; 1 Cor. 13:4.

WHAT IF HE PERSISTS?

If your husband has a relapse, does this mean that he is unrepentant or that the situation is hopeless? Not necessarily. Especially if addiction is involved, he could be facing a lifelong challenge. A relapse could occur even after years of abstinence. To avoid future setbacks, he will need to put up a stronger level of resistance, perhaps keeping his strategies in place even after the problem seems to be conquered. (Prov. 28:14; Matt. 5:29; 1 Cor. 10:12) He will need to cultivate a new “dominant mental attitude” and learn to

“**hate** what is bad”—pornography as well as any related unclean practices such as masturbation. (Eph. 4:23; Ps. 97:10; Rom. 12:9) Is he willing to make these efforts? If so, his situation may not be hopeless after all.*

What, though, if your mate simply shows no interest in fighting his problem? Understandably, you might experience recurring feelings of disappointment, anger, and betrayal. Seek peace of mind by leaving the matter in Jehovah’s hands. (1 Pet. 5:7) Continue to draw close to Jehovah through study, prayer, and meditation. As you do, be assured that he is drawing closer to you too. As stated at Isaiah 57:15, he **re-sides with** those who feel “crushed and lowly,” reviving their spirit. Endeavor to be the best Christian you can be. Seek support from the elders. And remain hopeful that at some future time, your husband may make a heartfelt change.—Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9.

* Because of the addictive nature of pornography, some couples have made the personal decision to seek professional assistance in addition to the spiritual shepherding provided by the elders.

Focus on your relationship
with Jehovah



How did the article “Let Your Name Be Sanctified” in *The Watchtower* of June 2020 clarify our belief regarding Jehovah’s name and his sovereignty?

■ In that article, we learned that there is really just one issue facing all intelligent creation: the sanctification of Jehovah’s great name. The issue of sovereignty—that is, Jehovah’s way of ruling is best—is a facet of the one great issue. Likewise, the issue of human integrity is another facet of that one great issue.

Why do we now emphasize that the greatest issue centers on Jehovah’s name and sanctifying it? Let us examine three reasons.

First, **Satan attacked Jehovah’s name, or reputation**, in the garden of Eden. Satan’s sly question to Eve implied that Jehovah was an ungenerous God who placed unreasonable restrictions on His subjects. Then Satan directly contradicted Jehovah’s words, in effect calling God a liar. So he slandered Jehovah’s name. He became “the Devil,” which means “slanderer.” (John 8:44) Because Eve believed Satan’s lies, she disobeyed God, rebelling against his sovereignty. (Gen. 3:1-6) To this day, Satan slanders God’s name, spreading lies about Jehovah as a Person. Those who believe such lies are more likely to disobey Jehovah. So to God’s people, the slander against Jehovah’s holy name is the ultimate injustice. It is the root cause of all the misery and wickedness in the world.

Second, for the good of all creation, **Jehovah is determined to vindicate his name, clearing it of all reproach**. That is of the utmost importance to Jehovah. He thus says: “I will certainly sanctify my great



Satan has slandered God’s name since the rebellion in the garden of Eden

name.” (Ezek. 36:23) And Jesus made clear what should be a top priority in the prayers of all faithful servants of Jehovah when he said: “Let your name be sanctified.” (Matt. 6:9) The Bible again and again emphasizes the importance of glorifying Jehovah’s name. Consider just a few examples: “Give Jehovah the glory due his name.” (1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 96:8) “Sing praises to his glorious name.” (Ps. 66:2) “I will glorify your name forever.” (Ps. 86:12) One of the times that Jehovah himself spoke from heaven occurred at the temple in Jerusalem, where Jesus said: “Father, glorify your name.” Jehovah, in turn, answered: “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.”—John 12:28.*

Third, **Jehovah’s long-range purpose is connected to his name**, or reputation. Consider: After the final test that follows the Thousand Year Reign of Christ, what next? Will intelligent creation continue to be divided over the great issue, the sanctification of Jehovah’s name? To help us answer that question, let us recall the two related facets

* The Bible also shows that Jehovah acts “for the sake of his name.” For example, he leads his people, helps them, rescues them, forgives them, and preserves them alive—all for the sake of his great name, Jehovah.—Ps. 23:3; 31:3; 79:9; 106:8; 143:11.

—human integrity and universal sovereignty. Will humans who have proved faithful continue to face the challenge of keeping their integrity? No. They will be perfect and fully tested. Everlasting life will lie ahead of them. Will universal sovereignty continue to be a focus of discussion, even division, among intelligent creation? No. The rightfulness and supremacy of Jehovah’s way of ruling will be established for all time. What, though, about Jehovah’s name?

Jehovah’s name will by then be completely sanctified, completely free of slander. However, it will continue to draw the attention of all faithful ones in heaven and on earth. Why? Because they will see Jehovah continue to do amazing things. Consider: Because Jesus will humbly turn all rulership over to Jehovah, God will “be all things to everyone.” (1 Cor. 15:28) After that, humans on earth will delight in “the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Rom. 8: 21) And Jehovah will completely fulfill his long-range purpose to bring all intelligent

creation in heaven and on earth together as one great, united family.—Eph. 1:10.

How will those developments affect Jehovah’s family in heaven and on earth? It stands to reason that we will feel a need—an ardent desire—to keep praising Jehovah’s beautiful name. The psalmist David was inspired to write: “May Jehovah God be praised . . . May his glorious name be praised forever.” (Ps. 72:18, 19) For all eternity, we will continue to find new and thrilling reasons to do that.

After all, Jehovah’s name represents everything about him. Mainly, then, his name reminds us of his love. (1 John 4:8) We will always **remember** that Jehovah created us out of love, that he provided the ransom sacrifice out of love, and that he demonstrated the righteousness of his way of ruling out of love. But we will **continue to see** how Jehovah showers his creation with his love. For all eternity, we will be moved to draw closer to him as our Father and to sing praises to his glorious name.—Ps. 73:28.

Jehovah will cause his name to be glorified for all eternity



SONG 114

“Exercise Patience”

PREVIEW

In Satan’s world, patience is in short supply. However, the Bible tells us to clothe ourselves with patience. This article will show us why this quality is so important and how we can become more patient.

Continue to Be Patient

“*Clothe yourselves with . . . patience.*”—COL. 3:12.

WE ALL appreciate people who are patient. Why is that the case? We respect those who can wait for something without getting frustrated. We appreciate that others are patient with us when we make mistakes. And we are grateful that our Bible teacher was patient with us as we struggled to learn, accept, or apply a Bible teaching. Above all, how thankful we are that Jehovah God is patient with us!—Rom. 2:4.

² Although we value patience in others, we ourselves may not always find it easy to be patient. For example, we may struggle to stay calm when stuck in traffic, especially if we are running late. We may lose our temper when others irritate us. And, at times, we could find it hard to keep waiting for Jehovah’s promised new world. Would you like to be more patient? In this article, we will consider what it means to be patient and why it is so important. We will also review what can help us to develop more patience.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PATIENT?

³ Consider four ways we can demonstrate patience. First, ***a patient person is slow to anger.*** He tries to stay

1. Why do you appreciate people who are patient?
2. In what situations may we find it difficult to be patient?
3. How does a patient person react when provoked?

calm and to hold back from retaliating when provoked or under stress. The phrase “slow to anger” first appears in the Bible when Jehovah is described as “a God merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in loyal love and truth.”—Ex. 34:6.

⁴ Second, **a patient person can wait calmly.** If something takes longer than expected, such a person tries to avoid becoming restless or irritable. (Matt. 18:26, 27) There are many situations in which we need to wait calmly. For example, we need to listen patiently while someone is speaking, without interrupting. (Job 36:2) We may also need patience when helping a student to understand a Bible teaching or to overcome a bad habit.

4. How does a patient person react when he has to wait?

⁵ Third, **a patient person is not rash.** Granted, some situations require quick action. However, when a patient person has an important task to accomplish, he does not rush into it; nor does he rush through it. Rather, he sets aside a reasonable amount of time to plan what he will do. Then he gives the task the time that it requires.

⁶ Fourth, **a patient person strives to bear trials without complaining.** In this sense, patience is closely related to endurance. Of course, it is not wrong to open up to a close friend and express how we feel about a trial. However, a patient person will do his best to continue enduring while maintaining a positive attitude. (Col. 1:11) As Christians, we

5. What is another way to demonstrate patience?

6. How does a patient person react when facing trials or adversity?



Just as a farmer waits patiently, trusting that he will reap a crop in time, we wait patiently, confident that Jehovah will fulfill all his promises in his due time (See paragraph 7)

need to show all these facets of patience. Why? Let us consider a few reasons.

WHY PATIENCE IS SO IMPORTANT

⁷ Patience is essential for our salvation. Like faithful servants of the past, we need to wait patiently for God to fulfill his promises. (Heb. 6:11, 12) The Bible compares our situation to that of a farmer. (**Read James 5:7, 8.**) A farmer works hard to plant and water his crop, but he does not know exactly when it will grow. So the farmer waits patiently, trusting that he will reap a crop. Likewise, we stay busy in spiritual activities even though we “do not know on what day [our] Lord is coming.” (Matt. 24:42) We wait patiently, confident that in his due time, Jehovah will fulfill all that he has promised. If we were to become impatient, we might get tired of waiting and start drifting away from the truth. We could also begin to pursue things that might give us instant gratification. But if we are patient, we can endure to the end and be saved.—Mic. 7:7; Matt. 24:13.

⁸ Patience helps us in our dealings with others. It helps us to listen attentively when others speak. (Jas. 1:19) Patience also promotes peace. It protects us from reacting too quickly and saying something unkind when we are under stress. And if we are patient, we will be slow to anger when someone hurts our feelings. Instead of retaliating, we

7. According to James 5:7, 8, why is patience so important? (See also picture.)

8. How does patience help us in our dealings with others? (Colossians 3:12, 13)

will “continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely.”—**Read Colossians 3:12, 13.**

⁹ Patience can also help us to make better decisions. Instead of being hasty or impulsive, we will take the time to research and evaluate the options that we have. (**Read Proverbs 21:5.**) For example, if we are looking for work, we might be inclined to accept the first offer we receive, even if the job will interfere with our worship to Jehovah. However, if we are patient, we will take the time to consider such factors as the location, the hours, and the impact the job could have on our family and spiritual life. By being patient, we may avoid making a bad decision.

HOW TO DEVELOP MORE PATIENCE

¹⁰ **Pray for more patience.** Patience is an aspect of the fruitage of the spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) So we can pray for holy spirit and ask Jehovah to help us cultivate its fruitage. If we face a situation that tests our patience, we “keep on asking” for holy spirit to help us be patient. (Luke 11:9, 13) We can also ask Jehovah to help us see matters from his point of view. Then after praying, we need to do our best to be patient each day. The more we pray for patience and strive to be patient, the more this quality will take root in our heart and become part of our personality.

¹¹ **Meditate on Bible examples.** The Bi-

9. How does patience help us when we need to make decisions? (Proverbs 21:5)

10. How can a Christian develop and maintain patience?

11-12. How has Jehovah shown patience?



Patience will help us to be slow to anger when provoked

(See paragraph 13)

ble contains many examples of people who were patient. By meditating on those accounts, we can learn ways to demonstrate patience. Before we consider some of these examples, let us look at the most outstanding example of patience—Jehovah.

¹² In the garden of Eden, Satan slandered Jehovah’s name and attacked His reputation as a fair and loving Ruler. Instead of immediately destroying the slanderer, Jehovah exercised patience and self-control, knowing that it would take time to prove that His rulership is best. And while waiting, he has endured reproach that has been brought on his name. Additionally, Jehovah has been waiting patiently so that more people can have the opportunity to obtain everlasting life. (2 Pet. 3:9, 15) As a re-

sult, millions of people have come to know him. If we focus on the benefits of Jehovah’s patience, we will likely find it easier to wait for his time to bring the end.

¹³ Jesus perfectly imitates his Father’s patience, and he demonstrated this quality while on earth. It must not always have been easy for him to show patience, especially toward the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. (John 8:25-27) Yet, just like his Father, Jesus was slow to anger. He did not retaliate when he was insulted or provoked. (1 Pet. 2:23) Jesus patiently endured trials without complaining. No wonder the Bible tells us to “consider closely the one who has endured such

13. How has Jesus perfectly imitated his Father’s patience? (See also picture.)



If we imitate the patience of Abraham, we can be sure that Jehovah will reward us now and even more so in His promised new world

(See paragraph 14)

hostile speech from sinners”! (Heb. 12: 2, 3) With Jehovah’s help, we too can patiently endure any trials that come our way.

¹⁴ What if our expectations about the end have not yet been fulfilled? Maybe we expected the end to come long ago. We may fear that we will not live long enough to see it. What can help us to continue to wait patiently? Consider Abraham’s example. When Abraham was a childless 75-year-old man, Jehovah promised him: “I will make you a great nation.” (Gen. 12:1-4) Did Abraham see that promise fulfilled? Not completely. After crossing the Euphrates River and waiting 25 years, Abraham

14. What can we learn from Abraham’s patience? (Hebrews 6:15) (See also picture.)

did see the miraculous birth of his son Isaac, and after another 60 years, his grandsons Esau and Jacob were born. **(Read Hebrews 6:15.)** But Abraham never saw his descendants become a great nation and inherit the Promised Land. However, that faithful man did enjoy a close friendship with his Creator. (Jas. 2:23) And when Abraham is resurrected, how thrilled he will be to learn that his faith and patience resulted in blessings for all nations! (Gen. 22: 18) What is the lesson? We personally may not see all of Jehovah’s promises fulfilled right away. However, if we are patient like Abraham, we can be sure that Jehovah will reward us now and even more so in His promised new world.—Mark 10:29, 30.

¹⁵ The Bible contains many other examples of people who were patient. (Jas. 5:10) Why not make it a study project to examine such examples?* For instance, although David was anointed at an early age to be the future king of Israel, he had to wait many years before he received the kingship. Simeon and Anna worshipped Jehovah faithfully while they waited for the promised Messiah. (Luke 2:25, 36-38) As you study such accounts, look for the answers to the following questions: What may have helped this person to show patience? How did he benefit by being patient? How can I imitate him? You might also benefit by learning about those who did not show patience. (1 Sam. 13:8-14) You might ask: ‘What may have contributed to their lack of patience? What consequences did they face?’

* To find Bible accounts about patience, you could consult the heading “Patience” in the *Watch Tower Publications Index*.

15. What could we consider during our personal study?

¹⁶ **Consider the benefits of being patient.** When we are patient, we are happier and calmer. Thus, patience can improve our mental and physical health. When we are patient with others, we enjoy better relationships with them. Our congregation becomes more united. If someone provokes us, our being slow to anger can prevent the situation from getting worse. (Ps. 37:8, ftn.; Prov. 14:29) But most of all, when we are patient, we imitate our heavenly Father and draw even closer to him.

¹⁷ What an appealing and beneficial quality patience is! While we may not always find it easy to be patient, with Jehovah’s help, we can continue to cultivate this quality. And as we patiently wait for the new world, we can be confident that “the eye of Jehovah watches over those fearing him, those *waiting* for his loyal love.” (Ps. 33:18) May we all be determined to continue clothing ourselves with patience.

16. What are some benefits of being patient?

17. What should we be determined to do?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What does it mean to be patient?
- Why is it important to be patient?
- How can we develop more patience?

SONG 33

Throw Your Burden
on Jehovah

PREVIEW

This article will help us to run the race for life. As runners, we must carry certain loads. These include our dedication vow, family obligations, and accountability for our decisions. But we must throw off any unnecessary weight that could slow us down. What does that include? This article will answer that question.

Carry What You Must, and Throw Off the Rest

“Let us also throw off every weight . . . , and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”—HEB. 12:1.

THE Bible compares our life as Christians to a race. The runners who successfully cross the finish line are rewarded with everlasting life. (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) We need to make every effort to keep on running, especially because the finish line is closer than ever. The apostle Paul, who successfully finished his race for life, identified what will help us to win the race. He directed us to “throw off every weight and . . . run with endurance the race that is set before us.”—**Read Hebrews 12:1.**

² When Paul wrote that we must “throw off *every* weight,” did he mean that there was no load a Christian should carry? No, that was not his point. Rather, he meant that we need to get rid of every *unnecessary* weight. This type of weight could hinder us and cause us to tire out. To endure, we must quickly identify and discard any unnecessary weight that could slow us down. At the same time, however, we do not want to cast aside loads that we should carry. Otherwise, we could disqualify ourselves from the race. (2 Tim. 2:5) What loads must we carry?

³ **Read Galatians 6:5.** Paul identified something that

1. According to Hebrews 12:1, what do we need to do in order to reach the finish line in our race for life?
2. What does it mean to “throw off every weight”?
3. (a) According to Galatians 6:5, what must we carry? (b) What will we consider in this article, and why?



Carrying our own load includes living up to our dedication vow to Jehovah, fulfilling our family obligations, and accepting the consequences of our decisions
(See paragraphs 4-9)

we must carry. He wrote that “each one will carry his own load.” Paul here referred to our personal load of responsibility before God, something we must carry on our own. In this article, we will consider what is included in our “own load” and how we can carry it. Also, we will identify unnecessary weights that we might be carrying and learn how we can throw them off. Carrying our own load and throwing off unnecessary weight will help us to run our race for life successfully.

LOADS WE MUST CARRY

4 *Our dedication vow.* When we dedicated ourselves to Jehovah, we vowed to worship him and to do his will. We must keep that vow. Living up to our dedication is a heavy responsibility, but it is not a burden. After all, Jehovah created us to do his will. (Rev. 4:11) He put within us a spiritual need and created us in his image. As a result, we are able to draw close to him and to find delight in doing

4. Why is our dedication vow not a burden? (See also picture.)

his will. (Ps. 40:8) What is more, when we do God’s will and follow his Son, we “find refreshment” for ourselves.—Matt. 11:28-30.

⁵ **How can you carry the load?** Two things can help. First, continue to strengthen your love for Jehovah. You can do that by meditating on all the good he has done for you and the blessings he has in store for you. The more your love for God grows, the easier it will be for you to obey him. (**Read 1 John 5:3.**) Second, imitate Jesus. He succeeded in doing God’s will because he prayed to Jehovah for help and kept focused on his reward. (Heb. 5:7; 12:2) Like Jesus, pray to Jehovah for strength and keep the hope of everlasting life clearly in mind. As you grow in your love for God and imitate his Son, you will be able to fulfill your dedication.

⁶ **Our family obligations.** In our race for life, we must love Jehovah and Jesus more than we love our relatives. (Matt. 10:37) This does not mean, however, that we can neglect our family obligations, as though these were holding us back from pleasing God and Christ. On the contrary, to be acceptable to God and Christ, we need to fulfill our role in the family. (1 Tim. 5:4, 8) When we do, we will be happier. After all, Jehovah designed families to thrive when husband and wife treat each other with love and respect, when parents love and

train their children, and when children obey their parents.—Eph. 5:33; 6:1, 4.

⁷ **How can you carry the load?** Whatever your role is in the family, trust in the wisdom found in the Bible instead of relying on mere emotions, culture, or what so-called experts may say. (Prov. 24:3, 4) Make good use of our Bible-based publications. These contain practical suggestions on how to apply Bible principles. For example, the article series “Help for the Family” has information tailored to the specific challenges that couples, parents, and teenagers face today.* Be determined to apply what the Bible says, even if other family members do not. When you do, your family will benefit and you will enjoy Jehovah’s blessing.—1 Pet. 3:1, 2.

⁸ **Accountability for our decisions.** Jehovah has given us the gift of free will, and he wants us to enjoy the benefits that come from making good decisions. But he also does not shield us from the results of bad decisions. (Gal. 6:7, 8) For that reason, we accept the consequences of our poor choices, thoughtless words, and hasty actions. Depending on what we have done, we may be troubled by a guilty conscience. However, knowing that we are account-

* You can find the article series “Help for the Family” on jw.org. Some examples of articles available for married couples are “How to Show Respect” and “How to Show Appreciation”; for parents, “Teaching Children Smartphone Sense” and “How to Communicate With Your Teenager”; and for teenagers, “How to Resist Peer Pressure” and “How to Deal With Loneliness.”

5. What can help you to fulfill your dedication? (1 John 5:3)

6. Why must we care for family obligations? (See also picture.)

7. How can you fulfill your role in the family?

8. How can our decisions affect us?

able for our decisions can prompt us to confess our sins, correct our errors, and avoid repeating our mistakes. Taking such actions can help us to stay in the race for life.

⁹ ***How can you carry the load?*** If you cannot undo a poor decision, accept your current situation. Recognize that you cannot change the past. Do not waste your emotional and mental energy justifying yourself or blaming yourself or others for your bad decisions. Instead, acknowledge your mistakes and work to make the best of your present circumstances. If you feel guilty about a wrong you committed, humbly turn to Jehovah in prayer, admit your error, and ask him to forgive you. (Ps. 25:11; 51:3, 4) Apologize to those you may have wronged, and if necessary, seek the help of the elders. (Jas. 5:14, 15) Learn from your mistakes, and try to avoid repeating them. As you do, you can be certain that Jehovah will show you mercy and provide you with the support you need.—Ps. 103:8-13.

WEIGHTS WE MUST “THROW OFF”

¹⁰ ***Unrealistic expectations.*** We can burden ourselves with unrealistic expectations when we compare ourselves with others. **(Read Galatians 6:4.)** If we constantly compare ourselves with others, we could become envious and competitive. (Gal. 5:26) In an effort to accomplish what others have achieved,

we may push ourselves beyond what our abilities and circumstances reasonably permit. And if “expectation postponed makes the heart sick,” how much more disheartening it is to set expectations that we can never meet! (Prov. 13:12) Doing so can sap our strength and slow us down in our race for life.—Prov. 24:10.

¹¹ ***How can you throw off that weight?*** Do not expect more of yourself than what Jehovah requires. He never expects you to give what you do not have. (2 Cor. 8:12) Be assured that Jehovah does not compare what you do with what others do. (Matt. 25:20-23) He treasures ***your*** whole-souled service, ***your*** faithfulness, and ***your*** endurance. Modestly accept that your age, health, and circumstances may limit what you can now do. Like Barzillai, be willing to decline privileges when physical limitations become a problem. (2 Sam. 19:35, 36) Like Moses, accept help and delegate responsibilities to others when appropriate. (Ex. 18:21, 22) Such modesty will prevent you from setting unrealistic expectations that could wear you out in your race for life.

¹² ***Feeling responsible for the poor decisions that others make.*** We cannot make decisions for others; nor can we always shield them from the consequences of the bad choices they make. For example, a son or a daughter may eventually decide to stop serving Jehovah. That

9. What can help you to cope with a poor decision? (See also picture.)

10. Why are unrealistic expectations a heavy burden? (Galatians 6:4)

11. What can help you to avoid unrealistic expectations?

12. Are we responsible for the poor decisions that others make? Explain.



After you have sincerely repented, Jehovah does not keep thinking about your sins, and neither should you
(See paragraph 15)

decision can cause untold grief to the parents. However, parents who blame themselves for their child's poor decision take on a heavy burden. It is not a weight that Jehovah expects them to bear.—Rom. 14:12.

¹³ How can you throw off that weight? Recognize that Jehovah has given all of us free will. He lets each person make his own choice. That includes whether to serve him. Jehovah knows that you are not a perfect parent; he simply wants you to do the best you can. The choice your child makes is his responsibility, not yours. (Prov. 20:11) Still, you may fret over mistakes you made as a parent. If so, let Jehovah know how you feel and ask for his forgiveness. He knows you cannot relive the past and change what has happened. At the same

13. How can a parent deal with a child's poor decision?

time, he does not expect you to keep your child from reaping what he has sown. Bear in mind that if your child makes any effort to return to Jehovah, He will eagerly receive him back.—Luke 15:18-20.

¹⁴ Excessive guilt. When we sin, it is understandable that we feel guilty. However, excessive guilt is a weight we were never meant to carry. It is a weight we must throw off. How do we know if our guilt is excessive? If we confessed our sin, repented, and are taking steps to avoid repeating our sin, we can trust that Jehovah has forgiven us. (Acts 3:19) After we have taken those steps, Jehovah does not want us to continue to feel guilty. He knows how damaging persistent guilt can be. (Ps. 31:10) If we become overwhelmed with sadness,

14. Why is excessive guilt a weight we should throw off?

we might give up in our race for life.—2 Cor. 2:7.

¹⁵ **How can you throw off that weight?** When plagued with excessive guilt, focus on the “true forgiveness” that God provides. (Ps. 130:4) When he forgives those who sincerely repent, he promises: “I will no longer remember their sin.” (Jer. 31:34) This means that Jehovah will not thereafter hold your past sins against you. So do not view the consequences of your sins as evidence that he has not forgiven you. And do not punish yourself because your past mistakes may limit what you can now do in his service. Jehovah does not keep thinking about your sins, and neither should you.—**Read 1 John 3:19, 20.**

RUN TO WIN

¹⁶ As we run our race for life, we must “run in such a way that [we] may win it.” (1 Cor. 9:24) We can do that if we recognize the difference between the loads

15. What can help you deal with excessive guilt? (1 John 3:19, 20) (See also picture.)

16. As runners, what must we recognize?

we must carry and the weights we must throw off. In this article, we have discussed just a few examples of what we must carry and what we must discard. But others could be mentioned. Jesus said that we could “become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life.” (Luke 21:34) These and other scriptures can help you to identify adjustments you might need to make as you run your race for life.

¹⁷ We can be sure that we will win the race for life because Jehovah will give us the strength we need. (Isa. 40:29-31) Therefore, do not slow down! Imitate the apostle Paul, who put his all into acquiring the prize set before him. (Phil. 3:13, 14) No one can run this race for you, but with Jehovah’s help you can succeed. Jehovah can help you carry your loads and throw off unnecessary weights. (Ps. 68:19) With Jehovah on your side, you will be able to run your race with endurance and win!

17. Why can we be sure that we will win the race for life?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

■ What loads must we carry?

■ What weights should we “throw off”?

■ How can we run to win?

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STUDY TIP

Find Spiritual Gems About Jehovah

When we read the Bible, we can use various study tools to clarify what we read. Yet, we do well to search out more than just facts. We want to find spiritual gems about Jehovah's personality that will increase our love for him. To do this, we can ask ourselves, 'What does this Bible passage teach me about Jehovah?'

We can look for evidence of Jehovah's outstanding attributes of love, wisdom, justice, and power. However, Jehovah's personality is not limited to these attributes. It includes other appealing qualities. Where can you find more information about his qualities?

Review the list of over 50 additional qualities found in the *Watch Tower Publications Index* under the heading "Jehovah" and then the subheading "Qualities by Name." Research the ones that fit the Bible account you are reading. (If you have access only to the *Research Guide for Jehovah's Witnesses*, look under the heading "Jehovah God" and then the subheading "Jehovah's Qualities.")

COVER PICTURE:

Jehovah rewards Daniel's loyalty by sending an angel and by shutting the mouth of the lions (See study article 33, paragraph 11)

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