



Useful Illustrations

ABORTION

A professor at the UCLA Medical School asked his students this question - "Here is the family history: The father has Syphilis. The mother has TB. They already have had four children. The first is blind. The second died. The third is deaf. The fourth has TB. The mother is pregnant. The parents are willing to have an abortion if you decide they should. What do you think?" Most of the students decided on an abortion. "Congratulations," said the professor, "you have just murdered Beethoven!"

APOSTASY

Regarding how detectives train themselves to recognize counterfeit money: The detectives don't surround themselves with samples of it, studying the confiscated handiwork of criminals. No, instead they meticulously study "the real thing", becoming so familiar with it, that any attempted "copy" stands out as an obvious fraud. And isn't that the way it should be with us and false religion? We don't need to become experts on all the varieties of false religion that the great counterfeiter, Satan the Devil, has produced. Rather, we need to meticulously study "the real thing", the truth! If we do, all these other bogus "copies" will stand out as the obvious frauds that they really are.

BLURRED VISION

A businessman was highly critical of his competitor's storefront windows. "Why, they are the dirtiest windows in town," he claimed. Fellow business people grew tired of the man's continual criticism and nitpicking comments about their windows. One day over coffee, the businessman carried the subject just too far. Before leaving, a fellow store owner suggested the man get his own windows washed. He followed the advice, and the next day at coffee, he exclaimed, "I can't believe it. As soon as I washed my windows, my competitor must have cleaned his too. You should see them shine."

Application: Many times its easier to see the problems and imperfections of others, than our own. Christ called it the "rafter in your own eye" (Luke 6:42). Maybe first we all need to "wash our own windows".

BAD HABIT

On the Western slopes of the Rocky Mountains, a giant Sequoia lies rotting. It was a growing sapling when Christ walked the shores of Galilee. When Columbus discovered America, it was reaching maturity and it looked down from lofty heights during the American Civil War. It seemed destined to live many more centuries.

Then, a few years ago, a tiny beetle started to burrow into its bark and lay eggs that would produce other beetles. It seemed like an unequal battle at first, but the few beetles multiplied into hundreds, then into thousands, and finally into millions. First they attacked the bark, then they worked deeper into the trunk, and finally, they were eating the very heart and strength of that magnificent forest giant.

Then one day, after withstanding the elements for centuries, the rain came, the winds blew, the lightning flashed, and the giant tree fell. Not because of the elements, but because of the weakening effects of those tiny beetles.

Bad habits do the same thing to people. They slowly take a toll, until the day comes when the man or woman fall like that giant tree.

BALANCE THE PRESSURES

As a deep sea diver submerges deeper and deeper under the water, he feels increased pressure.

How does the diver compensate for the additional pressure that is coming from the outside of his suit? Does he open the face mask to let some water in to relieve the pressure? No, he must increase the air pressure on the inside to compensate.

This illustration shows that when put under great pressure, our first tendency might be to miss a meeting or skip one day in service in order to relieve that pressure. But just the opposite is required. If we feel ourselves being pressured by this system of things, we need to take time for extra study, prayer and service in order to balance the pressure we are feeling!

BRING YOUR UMBRELLA

One summer, a drought threatened the crop in a small town. On a hot and dry Sunday, the village parson told his congregation, "There isn't anything that will save us except to pray for rain. Go home, pray, believe, and come back next Sunday ready to thank God for sending rain."

The people did as they were told and returned to church the following Sunday. But as soon as the parson saw them, he was furious.

"We can't worship today. You do not yet believe," he said.

"But," they protested, "we prayed, and we do believe."

"Believe?" he responded. "Then where are your umbrellas?"

Some people have left their umbrellas at home. They are merely hoping their wishes and prayers will bear fruit.

Others bring their umbrellas with them. They expect and believe their dreams and desires will come to pass.

Application - Today, as Christians, how will we approach that which we are yearning for? Will we expect our prayers and work to bring about results? Let us pray to Jehovah with faith that "could move a mountain", and act in harmony with what we pray. Will you bring your umbrella?

BEARHUG

Once there was a hunter out hunting bears.

The hunter spotted a bear and carefully raise his rifle and took aim.

He was just about to pull the trigger when he heard a voice say: "Wait, Mr. Hunter!"

The voice came from the bear.

The bear continued, saying: "Let's sit down and talk things over."

The hunter lowered his rifle and sat down on a log with the bear.

The bear said to the hunter: "Let's try to be reasonable and reach a compromise."

The hunter took off his hat and scratched his head and said, "Okay."

The bear asked the hunter just what was it that he wanted.

The hunter said: "A fur coat." The bear replied: "That sound reasonable."

The bear went on to say: "All I want is a full stomach."

That sounded fair enough too.

So the hunter and the bear discussed things a little more.

Then suddenly after a flurry of activity, the bear was alone.

The bear had his full-stomach, and the hunter was inside the fur coat.

Sometimes it is better to be a little cold and go without than to get wrapped up in unnecessary luxury items.

CABBAGE

A brother had a beautiful large drawing of the inside of a cabbage - how it is viewed when you cut it in half. When you view it, you see the core and the leaves growing outward from it. The tough leaves are on the outside; the tender ones, on the inside. Once in a while you will see a leaf that looks rusty. This is because it no longer gets nourishment from the core. The core represents Jehovah's organization. The leaves are the publishers. The outer, tough leaves are the mature ones who had been in the truth many years. The leaves on the inside are the newer ones who are protected by the outer 'leaves'. The rusty leaves are those who stopped feeding from the "food" coming from the core - they stop associating, studying, etc. and so turned RUSTY.

CARING VILLAGERS

Once upon a time, there was a village where the townspeople wanted to take care of those who were less fortunate than they. Each agreed to contribute a sack of grain for those in the neighbourhood who were elderly, ill or poor.

A large vat was put in the village square where the sacks were to be emptied. The day appointed for the opening of the vat arrived. The villagers assembled, a trumpet blew, the cover was lifted with great ceremony, and . . . the vat was empty.

Each villager, thinking, "My little bit of grain will not be missed", had failed to respond.

Like the villagers we have a commitment to Jehovah, as evidenced by our baptism, to assist others by preaching and teaching them. Are we doing our share? How about work in the congregation? Are we leaving this work up to others, or do we have an active share, always looking to progress.

CHEERFUL GIVER

A man went to his farmer friend and asked him: "If you had ten cows would you give me 5?"

The farmer replied "Certainly! If I had 10 cows I would give you five!"

The man then asked: "If you had 6 pigs would you give me 3?"

The farmer replied "Without a doubt if I had 6 pigs I would give you 3!"

The man then asked: "If you had 2 chickens would you give me one?"

The farmer then replied: "Now that's unfair! Because you know I have 2 chickens!"

CHICKEN AND PIG

A chicken and pig were walking towards town and they came across a restaurant that was advertising a ham and eggs special. The chicken said to the pig, "You know, I think we should go in there and make a contribution!" The pig answered back, "For you its a contribution - for me it's a commitment

CONSCIENCE

The early Indians (Native Americans) believed that the conscience was a triangular shaped object placed close to a persons heart. When a person did something that he knew was wrong, this triangle

shaped object (the conscience) would rotate and prick the heart, causing pain. Each time, it would rotate again, pricking the heart, causing pain. However, they believed, that if a person kept on doing something over and over that he knew was wrong, the sharp points of his conscience would get blunt, and therefore STOP pricking his heart and causing pain when it rotated.

The Bible illustrated this another way at 1 Timothy 4:2 "by the hypocrisy of men who speak lies, marked in their conscience as with a branding iron;". Paul's reference to a conscience that is marked as with a branding iron indicates that it would be like seared flesh that is covered over with scar tissue and void of nerve endings and, therefore, without sense of feeling. (1Ti 4:2)

DASHBOARD WARNING LIGHTS

Most of us have seen a red light come on our automobile's dashboard. Maybe for oil pressure, engine temperature, brake system, low fuel, etc. We can avoid much trouble by giving the needed attention to these warning light signals; as soon as possible!

There is a Spiritual Dash Board Warning Lights System that each of us need to check on regularly.

What are these Warning Indicators.

1. Increasing Problems In Family - Due To Lack Of Applying Bible Principles.
2. Lack of Zeal and Joy in the Ministry.
3. Lack of Self-Control.
4. Loss of Enthusiasm for the Truth.
5. Neglecting of Associating at Meetings.
6. Overly Critical of Elders and Organization.
7. Harboring Serious and Continued Doubts.

Have you checked your dashboard lately?

DEATH ROW

Two brothers visit a brother who has been inactive for sometime. One of the visitors asked the inactive brother what standing did he think he had with Jehovah God. He said that probably he was on death row. The visitor told him that at that time, over a hundred individuals were in prison on death row and all of them were doing everything they could to have their sentence stayed, just so they could live just a few more years. Everlasting life is worth the effort.

DO AS WE ARE TOLD

God's law cannot be bypassed. To illustrate: A father tells his young son, You must not cross the pond. The ice is too thin. The boy disobeys. But he makes it to the other side. The father watched in horror. Should the father say. Good for you son? Or should he reprimand him. The fact is, he may have gone through the ice and drowned. The fact is, it was foolish, reckless and could have cost his life.

DOING OUR UTMOST

For unlimited joy and happiness, remember, the more we serve the more joy we have. The Japanese Carp, if placed in a small bowl, will grow to 2" or 3" in length. In a pond, they attain 6" to 10" In a large lake, they grow to over 3'! The size of the fish depends on the size of the body of water they are in. Water represents the many facets of our theocratic service. The fish represents joy, which grows in direct relationship to the amount of water it is in. So place your self in the largest body of service possible, and watch joy grow as Jehovah blesses you!

ENDURANCE

Endurance is like dancing with a gorilla; you don't stop when YOU get tired, you stop when the GORILLA gets tired.

ENDURANCE

If we have ever seen a snake on the wild life stories, then we may remember seeing what happens when two snakes come in contact with each other. They will hiss and keep their mouth open as wide as they can. They move from side to side as they wait for an opportunity to strike. As soon as one tires out and closes his mouth, the other snake strikes and it is all over for the other snake. Well, Satan is pictured as the great snake in the Bible and he is ready to strike at any time. But as long as we keep our mouths wide open in the preaching work and stay closely associated with God's people he cannot strike. So as long as we have the time left favourable for preaching, let us not tire out, and lose our hope in the snares of Satan's old system!

FAITH AND WORKS

An old Scotsman was operating a small rowboat for transporting passengers across one of the little lakes in Scotland. One day a passenger noticed that he had carved on one oar the word "Faith" and on the other oar the word "Works." Curiosity led him to ask the meaning of this. The old man said, "I will show you." He dropped one oar and plied the other called "Works," and they just went around in circles. Then he dropped that oar and began to ply the one called "Faith," and the little boat went around in circles again--this time the other way around.

After this demonstration, the old man picked up both "Faith" and "Works" and plying both oars together sped swiftly over the water, explaining to his inquiring passenger, "You see, that is the way it is in life as well as in the boat."

FAULTFINDING

On his first assignment as an auto-body trainee, Stan began work on a car needing a new bumper and some door repairs. He spent hours doing a perfect job, but when the owner came to pick it up, he wasn't pleased.

Baffled, Stan asked, "What's wrong?" Pointing to the side of the car, the man complained about the paint not matching, uneven gaps between panels, and a host of other problems. He demanded an explanation and refused to pay. "Well I don't know what to say, except that the repairs I made, were to the other side of the car!"

POINTS TO LEARN FROM THIS: When we are determined to criticize, to find fault with our brothers, we may be too quick to jump to conclusions. Rather shouldn't we take our time to look at the whole picture (person), and see the positive qualities that Jehovah sees and loves.

FREE TO SOAR

One windy spring day, I observed young people having fun using the wind to fly their kites. Multicoloured creations of varying shapes and sizes filled the skies like beautiful birds darting and dancing in the heady atmosphere above the earth. As the strong winds gusted against the kites, a string kept them in check.

Instead of blowing away with the wind, they arose against it to achieve great heights. They shook and pulled, but the restraining string and the cumbersome tail kept them in tow, facing upward and against the wind. As the kites struggled and trembled against the string, they seemed to say, "Let me

go! Let me go! I want to be free!" They soared beautifully even as they fought the imposed restriction of the string. Finally, one of the kites succeeded in breaking loose. "Free at last" it seemed to say. "Free to fly with the wind."

Yet freedom from restraint simply put it at the mercy of an unsympathetic breeze. It fluttered ungracefully to the ground and landed in a tangled mass of weeds and string against a dead bush. "Free at last." Free to lie powerless in the dirt, to be blown helplessly along the ground, and to lodge lifeless against the first obstruction.

How much like kites we sometimes are. Jehovah permits adversity and sets restrictions, rules to follow from which we can grow and gain strength. Restraint is a necessary counterpart to the winds of opposition. Some of us tug at the rules so hard that we never soar to reach the heights we might have obtained.

Let us each rise to the great heights our Heavenly Father has in store for us, recognizing that some of the restraints that we may chafe under are actually the steadying force that helps us ascend and achieve.

FREE YOURSELF FROM PRESSURE

We've all seen pictures of the huge Black or Striped Marlin being hooked by fishermen, and the gruelling and exhausting duel between the strapped-in fisherman and the thrashing fish (sometimes called a Sailfish or Spearfish, and documented to reach 1,400 lbs). As the huge fish starts to tire out, he will begin to surface, breaking water in a most dramatic way, shaking his head vigorously trying to throw the hook which could very well mean his eventual death. We might well consider why he does that. It has been said that the reason is that with the pressure under the water, he is unable to successfully sling his head back and forth, hoping to free himself by dislodging the hook. The water surrounding his head under the surface limits his ability to escape the line.

We might compare the Marlin's situation to many who for one reason or another find themselves "hooked" by one form of worldliness or another. It might be a type of entertainment, or an attitude, perhaps negative association, or even pursuits that in themselves might not be wrong, but that do not encourage spiritual advancement. When one realizes that this attraction or pursuit is affecting his spiritual standing, he needs to take steps to lift himself out of the environment that restricts his "throwing off" the "hook". Trying to free oneself of the potentially death-dealing pull, one needs to rise above the "sea level" of this old world, into the air above, and vigorously war against the hook in an attempt dislodge it. We cannot throw off bad things by remaining in the pressured surroundings of Satan's "sea", were we are held almost immobile by his design.

FRAGILE SPARROW

It was a chilly, overcast day when a man on a horse saw a little sparrow lying on its back in the middle of the road. Reining in his mount, he looked down and inquired of the fragile creature, "Just what do you think you're doing?"

"I heard the sky is going to fall today."

The man laughed, "And I suppose you think your skinny little legs can hold up the sky?"

"One does what one can," said the sparrow.

We may not be able to save the world, but we can make things better in our small corner of it. How have we contributed to the field work in our territory and reaching others? Are we like the man on the horse, overwhelmed by things, or are we like the sparrow, focusing on the small effort we can make to help.

GEESE

FACT 1: As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an "uplift" for the birds that follow. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

LESSON: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier, because they are travelling on the thrust of one another.

FACT 2: When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It then quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as a goose we will stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We will be willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

FACT 3: When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

LESSON: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

FACT 4: The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

LESSON: We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of other) is the quality of honking we seek.

FACT 5: When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

GENERATOR

Some may remember a small generator that you could buy for a bicycle. This small generator would spin against the tyre of the wheel and this in turn would give us light and illuminate the way for us. It is of interest that to make the light work we had to move, and the faster we would go the brighter the light became. If we want to shine as illuminators we must be on the move in Jehovah's work!

GET FIT

A brother was conducting a Bible study with a student who failed to put into practice what he was learning. One day, after the study, our brother mentioned to the student that he had bought a book on health and fitness with the promise: "Become as fit as a marine in sixteen weeks." "You know," he lamented, "I've had the book more than 16 weeks, I've read it more than three times already, and I'm STILL not as fit as a marine. In fact I'm just as unfit as I ever was." "Have you been doing the exercises from the book?" the Bible student asked. "No," the brother admitted. "Then how do you expect to get anywhere with the book if you just read it, but don't do what it says ..." The brother could tell by the way the tone of the student's voice changed during the middle of his question that he had got the point!

GET IN THE CAGE

At the big top at the Circus, the Ringmaster makes an announcement that the lion has escaped from his cage. Everyone needs to get to safety as quickly as possible. Where would the safest place for you to be? In the cage!

The bars are not restrictions, but Jehovah's loving protection, as expressed in his divine principles and commandments.

GET PERSONAL

Once there was a little boy who wanted to get the attention of his father, but his father had a number of friends over that weekend.

"Dad!" the little boy called.... "DAD!", but still no answer.

So the little boy sat back and watched what the other people were doing.

Suddenly the little boy said: "Mr. P-----?" That worked right away.

You see, most of the people visiting his father were fathers as well.

By using his personal name, the little boy was able to identify to whom he wanted to speak.

It is the same with our prayers today. The Bible shows us that there are many gods.

How do we get the attention of the true God?

It is by using his personal name, as the Bible shows.

GREEDY MONKEY

A person depending on worldly comforts can be likened to a greedy monkey. A greedy monkey is trapped quite easily. All you need is a secured narrow neck jar or vase with some peanuts or some fruit inside it. In it's greed, the monkey will grab as big a fistful as it can, quickly finding that it now can't remove its fist and the contents in it. Whatever the impending danger, that greedy little animal just refuses remove its hand without the contents!

What this system offers is mere peanuts compared to Jehovah's promises. LET GO OF IT!!

GOD'S EMBROIDERY

When I was a little boy, my mother used to embroider a great deal. I would sit at her knee and look up from the floor and ask what she was doing. She informed me that she was embroidering. I told her that it looked like a mess from where I was. As from the underside I watched her work within the boundaries of the little round hoop that she held in her hand, I complained to her that it sure looked messy from where I sat.

She would smile at me, look down and gently say, "My son, you go about your playing for a while, and when I am finished with my embroidering, I will put you on my knee and let you see it from my side."

I would wonder why she was using some dark threads along with the bright ones and why they seemed so jumbled from my view. A few minutes would pass and then I would hear Mother's voice say, "Son, come and sit on my knee."

This I did only to be surprised and thrilled to see a beautiful flower or a sunset. I could not believe it, because from underneath it looked so messy. Then Mother would say to me, "My son, from underneath it did look messy and jumbled, but you did not realize that there was a pre-drawn plan on the top. It was a design. I was only following it. Now look at it from my side and you will see what I was doing."

Many times through the years we may have asked our heavenly Father what was happening to our lives, and how to make sense of it. As we progress in understanding of his Fatherly and compassionate nature, we in time come to understand that what seems unclear to us from the underside, is beautifully taking form on the other. The dark threads may seem jumbled and a mess, and we are inclined to develop a negative attitude in our life, despite our Fathers comforting assurances. Yet with a confident faith in the final state of Jehovah's will and purpose accomplished,

we will be permitted to see the "top" side of the embroidery, when "all things are made new" (Rev. 21:5)

HOW TO CATCH A MONKEY

Native hunters in the jungles of Africa have a clever way of trapping monkeys. They slice a coconut in two, hollow it out, and in one half of the shell cut a hole just big enough for a monkey's hand to pass through. Then they place an orange in the other coconut half before fastening together the two halves of the coconut shell. Finally, they secure the coconut to a tree with a rope, retreat into the jungle, and wait.

Sooner or later, an unsuspecting monkey swings by, smells the delicious orange, and discover its location inside the coconut. The monkey then slips his hand through the small hole, grasps the orange and tries to pull it out the hole.

Of course the orange won't come out; it's too big for the hole.

To no avail the persistent monkey continues to pull and pull, never realizing the danger he is in.

While the monkey struggles with the orange, the hunters simply stroll in and capture the monkey by throwing a net over him. As long as the monkey keeps his fist wrapped around the orange, the monkey is trapped.

Scientists have always contested that the monkey is the most intelligent animal upon the face of the earth. Well, if this is true then why can't it figure out that the way to escape the trap is very simple. Just by letting go of its hold on the orange, it would be able to free himself but it chooses not to. Too bad. The monkey could save its own life and if it would only let go of the orange. It rarely occurs to a monkey, however, that it can't have both the orange and its freedom. That delicious orange becomes a deadly trap.

You see the world sets traps for you that are not unlike the monkey trap. You hear constantly that if you just have enough possessions, enough position, enough power, and enough prestige - then you'll be happy.

Under that illusion people spend their whole lives trying to pull the orange out of the coconut.

What about a little untruth here and there, how about some borderline entertainment, what about a little compromise - and there goes the trap. A net is now thrown over you and you can't budge.

Don't fall for it. Don't be trapped by thinking you can have it all. Don't destroy yourself by playing with fire and thinking that you won't get burned. Remember Christ's warning at Luke 21:34,35 regarding the "snare" that clamps down instantly upon those who become distracted. Also 1 Tim 6:9 again promising being caught in a "snare" if our primary determination is acquiring riches and seeking hurtful desires.

We no longer have to be trapped by the lures of this world. Let go of what you're holding on to, and let Jehovah set you free. You can't soar high if you keep on holding on to your excess baggage and they keep you trapped in a joyless world.

HOW HIGH CAN YOU JUMP?

Flea trainers have observed a predictable and strange habit of fleas while training them. Fleas are trained by putting them in a cardboard box with a top on it. The fleas will jump up and hit the top of the cardboard box over and over and over again. As you watch them jump and hit the lid, something

very interesting becomes obvious. The fleas continue to jump, but they are no longer jumping high enough to hit the top. Apparently, headache forces them to limit the height of their jump.

When you take off the lid, the fleas continue to jump, but they will not jump out of the box. They won't jump out because they can't jump out. Why? The reason is simple. They have conditioned themselves to jump just so high. Once they have conditioned themselves to jump just so high, that's all they can do!

Many times, people do the same thing. They restrict themselves and never reach their potential. Just like the fleas, they fail to jump higher, thinking they are doing all they can do.

Application: When we receive a new assignment in the congregation, or the opportunity to pioneer opens up, do we limit ourselves to only what we have been comfortable with in the pass (jump only so high?), or are we willing to stretch beyond what we may have considered our maximum?

HOLDING A GRUDGE

One day a visitor leaned on the old fence around a farm, while he watched an old farmer ploughing with a mule. After a while, the visitor said, "I don't like to tell you how to run your business, but you would not have to work so hard if you would just say, "gee" and "haw" to that mule instead of just tugging on those lines.

The old farmer stopped and pulled a big handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his face. Then he said, "Reckon you're right, but this animal kicked me five years ago and I ain't spoke to him since."

Some of us hold a grudge for a long, long time. We can remember distinctly the words that were spoken to us or the way we were mistreated and "we'll never forgive". Unfortunately, grudges don't hurt others nearly as much as they hurt us. But no matter how hard it may be, we'll tug on those reins until the day we die, rather than seek reconciliation.

Are there any mules you're not talking to?

HAPPY SHIRT

Once a king called for his son, the prince. He said, "Son, I want you to find happiness. So, go, search throughout the kingdom, find a man who is happy, buy his shirt, put it on and wear it. You will be happy the rest of your life.

Not many days afterward the prince set out on his journey. After a careful search of the land, the prince felt sad because he could not find anyone who was happy. On his way home he thought about what he would tell his father, the king. Just then he heard the voice of somebody singing, coming from a man working out in the field. The prince asked the man why he was singing so loud.

The man stopped his ploughing, scratched his head and said, "Because I'm happy!"

Right away, the prince said, "I want to buy your shirt. I don't care how much money you want for it, I'll pay it!"

The man replied, "But I do not own a shirt".

Happiness has nothing to do with possessing material things. The King had taught his son, the prince a very important lesson!

IT'S A MATTER OF TRUST

When studying God's Word with a student, we might find that he is reluctant to put trust in Jehovah to the point of letting go worldly pursuits, entertainment and way of life. The only means of getting away safe is by leaning fully on Jehovah's spirit and separating ourselves and our hearts from this old system, using all our strength to do so. If we hold on to the world while trying to lead a Christian way

of life, we will slip, fall and hurt ourselves badly. Yet such a reliance on Jehovah might a first scare people off, as they have to get away from what they used to consider as their only safe position before they can actually benefit from Jehovah's provisions. So to help them understand that the gear is reliable, we might have to take time to explain to our student how powerful the holy spirit is, how merciful Jehovah is, what a forgiving God he is, how the united brotherhood of Jehovah's faithful servants on earth is essential for our survival, how the faithful and discreet slave class takes wonderful care of Jehovah's belongings, and how we depend on it to get spiritual food in due time.

The more he knows about Jehovah's provisions, the less letting go worldly pursuits, entertainment and way of life, appears to be risky. He then realises that true security lies in good use of these provisions, just like rappelling gear will safely take one down a dangerous slope. It's a matter of trust!

JEHOVAH' S PERSPECTIVE

When we stand next to one of those big Super-tankers tied up to a wharf, it is HUGE!..... GIGANTIC! But then if we take an aeroplane trip and observe that same Super-tanker from 30,000 feet, it is very small and insignificant. Our problems and trials sometimes appear MOUNTAIN-LIKE, GIGANTIC, because we are so close to them. But if we try to see our problems and trials from a distance... from Jehovah's perspective.... our MOUNTAIN-LIKE, GIGANTIC problems will pale into insignificance.

JOY

J = Jehovah First
O =Others Next
Y =Yourself Last

JUDGING OTHERS

Very often when you look at the moon, you see only a part of it, but you know there is a much larger object there. Very often we look (or converse) with a person, we see or are aware of only a small sliver of their life and personality and we may think that that is all there is. Try to get to know more about the whole person!

JUST REMOVE THE ROCK

An old farmer had ploughed around a large rock in one of his fields for years. He had broken several plowshares and a cultivator on it and had grown rather morbid about the rock.

After breaking another ploughshare one day, and remembering all the trouble the rock had caused him through the years, he finally decided to do something about it.

When he put the crowbar under the rock, he was surprised to discover that it was only about six inches thick and that he could break it up easily with a sledgehammer. As he was carting the pieces away he had to smile, remembering all the trouble that the rock had caused him over the years and how easy it would have been to get rid of it sooner.

How many times in our growth as Christians have we avoided correcting a personal flaw, or ignored dealing with a long-standing grudge or grievance. How much better to follow the direction given by Christ to settle matters quickly, both as concerns our relationships with others, and in the putting on the "new personality".

JEHOVAH'S PROTECTION

An article in National Geographic several years ago painted an incredible picture of God's wings. After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree.

Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked the bird over with a stick. Upon doing so, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. When the blaze had arrived and the heat had singed her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, those under the cover of her wings would live.

Psalm 91:4 - And under his wings you will take refuge.

KANGAROO FARMER

There once was a farmer who had a big dog and a small boy. One day before going into the field he told his dog to keep an eye on his boy. While he was working a dingo came. When the dog saw the dingo, he quickly hid the boy in the house, then he went outside and fought with the dingo. The dingo hurt the dog, but could not kill him. After a while the dingo gave up and went back to the woods. Now when the farmer returned he noticed blood all over the dog, but he could not see his son. Thinking the dog had killed the boy, he shot the dog.

Imagine how he felt when he went inside and found the boy who told him what really happened!
Don't Jump To Conclusions!

LOVEBIRDS

Recently, my husband and I were walking through a local mall near closing time, when we decided to stop and take a look around the pet store. As we made our way past the cages of poodles and Pomeranians, tabby cats and turtles, our eye caught sight of something that immediately charmed us: a pair of peach-faced lovebirds. Unlike many other lovebirds we encountered there, this particular pair looked truly "in love." In fact, they snuggled and cuddled next to each other the whole time we watched them. Throughout the next few days, my mind returned to the image of those two delightful birds. I admired their devotion, and felt their very presence inspiring.

Apparently, these birds had the same effect on my husband, because he showed up late from work one night shortly thereafter, clutching an elegant bird cage that housed those two precious creatures, and introduced them as new additions to the family. For days we wrestled with names of well-known couples coming up with everything from Ricky and Lucy and George and Gracie to Wilma and Fred. But finally we decided on Ozzy and Harriet - a gentle reminder of a simpler day when love and togetherness between couples were not only a commitment, but a way of life.

And so it is with this in mind that I have watched these lovebirds and made the following observations about life and love:

- 1) If you spend too much time looking in the mirror, it's easy to lose your balance.
- 2) Always keep a pleasant look on your face, even if your cage needs cleaning.
- 3) If your mate wants to share your perch with you, move over.
- 4) The real treats in life usually come only come after you've cracked a few hulls.
- 5) It takes two to snuggle.
- 6) Sometimes your mate can see mites you didn't even know you had.
- 7) Singing draws more affection than squawking.
- 8) It is only when your feathers get ruffled that your true colours really show.
- 9) Too many toys can be distracting.

10) When you have love in your heart, everyone around you will find joy in your presence.

LEARN FROM THE ANT

Persistence And Determination

A man did a study to show he could keep food unopened in a room and keep ants from getting to it. In the centre of a large room, he placed a huge wooden tub filled with water. He placed a barstool in the centre of the tub and on the barstool he put a plate filled with chocolate candy. Around the tub, he painted a wide band of slow drying glue. He then sealed the room tight. Six days later he checked the room. Ants were all over the candy. How did they manage this? The first obstacle was the glue. Hundreds of ants sacrificed their bodies to become a bridge for the others. The water was the second obstacle. The ants carried up little bits of grass and wood and put them together with their spit to form a bridge to swing across to the leg of the barstool. Another kind of ant took an easier route. They simply walked up the wall, up to the ceiling over the stool and dropped onto the chocolate!

Another example of persistence is the Soldier or Marching ants of Malaysia. They march across the jungle, devouring whatever is in their path. If they come to a river and want to cross it, some break away from the group and a few go upstream, a few go downstream until they find the exact spot to cross, then go back to the colony and somehow communicate which way to go. The spot they choose is a sharp bend in the river, where the water happens to be flowing diagonally. The ants interlock with each other to become balls about the size of coconuts, then roll down the bank into the river and let the current carry them across. On the other side, they untangle and continue their march.

So, what does this teach us? As people dedicated to Jehovah, we must never give up in doing his will, even though the system gets worse and we must struggle more and more. We can gain strength from Jehovah to remain faithful.

LESSONS FROM NOAH

Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone might ask you to do something REALLY big.

Don't listen to critics, do what has to be done.

Build on high ground.

For safety's sake, travel in pairs.

Two heads are better than one.

Speed isn't always an advantage. The cheetahs were on board but so were the snails.

If you can't fight or flee - float!!

Take care of your animals as if they were the last ones on earth.

Don't forget that we're all in the same boat.

Stay below deck during the storm.

Remember that the ark was built by amateurs and the Titanic was built by professionals.

If you have to start over, have a friend by your side.

Remember that the woodpeckers INSIDE are often a bigger threat than the storm outside.

Don't miss the boat.

No matter how bleak it looks, there's always a rainbow on the horizon.

LIFTING ABOVE TRIALS

If you've ever tried to water-ski, you know how the water seems to resist you before you get up on the surface. The boat's engine roars, your muscles strain, and the water does everything it can to keep you down. But if you know how to take advantage of the boat's power, you are lifted up and within a few seconds you are skimming over the surface of the same water that held you back at first.

Water-skiing provides an analogy to our Christian experience as we go through the deep waters of trial. We must learn to take advantage of Jehovah's power. At first there is great struggle and effort as we hang on with all our might to some promise of God. The weight of our own weaknesses seem almost unbearable. But like the water that lifts the skis, our difficulties challenge us to draw on God's supernatural power. The apostle Paul put it like this: "However, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power beyond what is normal may be Gods, and not that out of ourselves." (2 Cor. 4:7).

Have we been willing to learn this spiritual truth? Have we viewed the deep waters of trial as an opportunity to realize the supernatural power that first lifts us up and then carries us over those same waters?

LISTEN AND SHOUT

A mighty king who ruled over a large country, wanted to make a great name for himself. One day the King sent forth a decree throughout his land, that in 30 days all the people of the land were to gather in front of the palace. The people numbered over five million. At a given signal, everyone was to shout at the top of their voice "Long live the great king!" What a shout that would be! With 5 million voices the cry would be heard throughout the land.

One man really looked forward to it. He thought the shout would be something he would tell his children and grand children about. He decided he would just listen! That way he could concentrate on hearing just how loud it was, and then be able to describe it much better! The special day came and the king made the signal and the man listened for this great shout.

But nothing happened!.

It seems that everyone decided they would just listen too, the silence was so great you could hear a pin drop!

If everyone just listens no one will say anything. We now have the opportunity to send a great world wide shout of praise to our Creator. So don't just listen for that ongoing shout- Be part of it! Each one of us makes just a small contribution and yet we are NOT insignificant. Each one of us along with our 5.8 million brothers make a mighty witness.

LISTEN TO GOD

The only survivor of a shipwreck washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements, and to store his few possessions. But then one day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened; everything was lost. He was stung with grief and anger. "God, how could you do this to me!" he cried. Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him. "How did you know I was here?" asked the weary man of his rescuers. "We saw your smoke signal," they replied. It is easy to get discouraged when things are going bad. But we shouldn't lose heart, because God is at work in our lives, even in the midst of pain and suffering. Paul wrote, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want" (Philippians 4:12). Paul had confidence that good would come out of everything (Romans 8:28), so he learned to be thankful, not bitter, even when he was suffering. Who knows? Remember next time your little hut is burning to the ground it just may be a smoke signal that summons the grace of God.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND

A man has a bad day at work and gets stuck in traffic coming home. He comes in and his wife asks how his day was.

He snaps back, "Don't ask!" and stomps away.

The wife gets mad and starts banging things around in the kitchen making dinner.

Her daughter comes in and asks a question. Her mother tells her "Get out, can't you see I'm busy!".

The dog then runs up to the daughter all happy to see her. The upset girl kicks at the dog and it goes rolling across the grass.

The dog picks itself back up and comes right back to the daughter and licks her.

Who behaved like the real Christian?

MAN'S BEST FRIEND (2)

A boy wanted a dog. So he asks his father, "Can I have a dog, Dad? " His dad looks at him, smiles, pats his head and says, "Let me think about it." A few days later, the boy again asks, "Dad, can I have a dog? I'll feed it and take care of it..." His dad starts to think, 'Maybe he's serious. I'll have to think more about this.' The little boy persists in his request over the next few weeks. One day the man hears a lot of noise coming from the basement. So he goes down to see what is going on. He finds his son busily pounding nails into some boards. "What are you doing?" he asks. "I'm making a house for my new dog," the boy replies. Moved by the boy's persistence and expectant attitude, the man bought his son a dog.

It is similar with our prayers to God today. We may not get the things we ask for at the time that we ask for them. If we persist in prayer, and 'keep on asking', we can be sure that our Best Friend, Jehovah, will hear our prayer, provided that it is in harmony with his righteous ways and principles.

MATERIAL THINGS

A rabbit saw a beautiful vegetable garden. He wanted to enjoy the vegetables, but how was he going to get in? Well, he found a hole in the fence but, alas, he was too fat to get through the hole. Then he decided, "I know. I'll not eat for a couple of days then I'll be thin enough to get through the hole." And that's what he did. After a few days he was thin enough to fit through the hole. But now he had another problem. Since he stuffed himself, he was now too fat to get back through the hole.

Now he is wondering how he's going to get OUT of the garden. Then it comes to him. "I'll not eat for a couple of days then I'll lose weight and I'll be thin enough to fit back through the hole." And that's what he did. After a few days he was thin enough to fit through the hole and he was able to get out of the garden. But, you know, Brother Rabbit didn't take anything into the garden; neither did he bring anything out. The same with us and material things. We didn't come into the world with any material goods and, when we die, we don't take any out. Shows the futility of striving for material things, don't you think?

MINISTRY

Some feel that their efforts in the ministry are inconsequential....some wonder if they will ever have the privilege of conducting a Bible study. We may know others that have more studies or experience more success in field service. A former policeman likened our collective, worldwide ministry to what policemen do when searching for evidence. They form a line, side by side, locking, arms together (ie....'shoulder to shoulder'). They all look down at their feet, scan carefully, then collectively, they all take one step forward, then repeat the process until the entire search area has been meticulously combed. In such a process, not all actually find the sought-after evidence, right? In fact, only a few may find pieces of the puzzle. Yet, results were possible ONLY because of the collective efforts of all....had not all been connected together, had there been gaps in the chain, how could they be sure they found all the evidence? Yes, all in the line are equally important. Of course it takes little imagination to make application of this illustration....not all of us find many pieces of evidence, or interested ones....we may go for stretches without finding evidence at our feet...yet we all serve

shoulder to shoulder, do we not? It is because of our COLLECTIVE efforts that we can "fully accomplish our ministry". This helps us to see that Jehovah treasures our service, our effort and presence, not our results. Naturally, the more time we are able to spend in the ministry, the greater the chances are that we will find 'evidence'....we can also do much to enhance our searching abilities....practice and application of the suggestions from the Faithful & Discreet Slave Class.

MR STUMBLE

The C.O. is visiting your congregation and he gives the talk and afterwards you accidentally trip up the C.O. and he falls down and stays there. You apologize with all your heart and beg his forgiveness and offer to help but he refuses and says, "No, leave me alone! You have stumbled me!" Finally you walk away and leave him there. That night it rains and it pours and there is thunder and lightning and you are sitting in your nice warm house with the love of your friends and family and then you remember the C.O. and you wonder:

"He wouldn't still be sitting there in those terrible conditions would he? So you go to bed and the next morning you get up prepare for service and drive to the hall, and there sitting in the yard soaking wet and muddy is the C.O.

"Brother C.O.!" you cry out, "Please don't stay out there in the rain and mud, but come in and join the congregation. Get cleaned up and enjoy the association and spiritual food in the Kingdom Hall!" But still he shakes his head and says: "No, leave me alone I have been stumbled and I want to stay out here!"

The point the brother was making was that many use the expression "I was stumbled" or "they were stumbled" like its a special label that will give them "Carte Blanch" not to have to do the necessary things required to gain Jehovah's approval.

MY FATHER

When I was four years old: My daddy can do anything.

When I was five years old: My daddy knows a whole lot.

When I was six years old: My dad is smarter than your dad.

When I was eight years old: My dad doesn't know exactly everything.

When I was 10 years old: In the olden days, when my dad grew up, things were sure different.

When I was 12 years old: Oh, well, naturally, Dad doesn't know anything about that. He is too old to remember his childhood.

When I was 14 years old: Don't pay any attention to my dad. He is so old-fashioned.

When I was 21 years old: Him? He's hopelessly out of date.

When I was 25 years old: Dad knows about it, but then he should, because he has been around so long.

When I was 30 years old: Maybe we should ask Dad what he thinks. After all, he's had a lot of experience.

When I was 35 years old: I'm not doing a single thing until I talk to Dad.

When I was 40 years old: I wonder how Dad would have handled it. He was so wise.

When I was 50 years old: I'd give anything if Dad were here now so I could talk this over with him. Too bad I didn't appreciate how smart he was. I could have learned a lot from him.

MAKING ADVERSITY WORK FOR OUR ADVANTAGE

A parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule braying. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he

called his neighbours together and told them what had happened, and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbours continued shovelling and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck him (as if mules could think). It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back, HE SHOULD SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP! This he did, blow after blow.

"Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!" he repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or distressing the situation seemed, the old mule fought panic and just kept right on SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP!

You're right! It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, STEPPED TRIUMPHANTLY OVER THE WALL OF THAT WELL! What seemed like it would bury him, actually blessed him, all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity. THAT'S LIFE! If we face our problems and respond to them positively, and refuse to give in to panic, bitterness, or self-pity, THE ADVERSITIES THAT COME ALONG TO BURY US USUALLY HAVE WITHIN THEM THE POTENTIAL TO BENEFIT AND BLESS US! Remember that FORGIVENESS--FAITH--PRAYER--PRAISE and HOPE are all excellent ways to "SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP" out of the wells in which we find ourselves!

MEMORIAL

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art. When the Vietnam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art.

The young man held out his package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this."

The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift."

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected. The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?" There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted. "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one." But the auctioneer persisted. "Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?" Another voice shouted angrily. "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Gogh's, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids!" But still the auctioneer continued. "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?" Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the long-time gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford. "We have \$10, who will bid \$20?" "Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters." "\$10 is the bid, won't someone bid \$20?"

The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!" A man sitting on the second row shouted. "Now let's get on with the collection!"

The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "I'm sorry, the auction is over."

"What about the paintings?"

"I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!"

God gave his son 2,000 years ago to die on a cruel torture stake. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is "The son, the son, who'll take the son?" Because, you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything. Will you take the son?

NEVER SPEND MAJOR TIME WITH MINOR PEOPLE

When picking friends, never spend major time with minor people. If there are people in your life that continually disappoint you, break promises, trample on your dreams, are too judgmental, have different values and don't back you during difficult times, these are not your friends.

To have a friend, be a friend. Sometimes in life as you grow, your friends will either grow or go. Surround yourself with people who reflect your values, goals, interests and lifestyle. When I look back over my life and count my successes, I'm thankful to God and to my family and friends who have enriched my life. Over the years, my telephone directory has changed because I've changed for the better.

And as you change, new people always show up in life to enrich you and make life much sweeter and easier to endure. Remember, birds of a feather, flock together. If you're an eagle, don't hang around chickens.

Chickens can't fly!

OBEDIENCE AND FAITH / THE ROCK

A man was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly he heard a voice that trembled like the thunder. It was God's voice and he told the man he had work for him to do, and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. God explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. This, the man did, day after day. For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all his might.

Each night the man returned to his cabin sore, and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain. Seeing that the man was showing signs of discouragement, Satan decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the man's weary mind: "You have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't budged. Why kill yourself over this? You are never going to move it." Thus giving the man the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure, these thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man. "Why kill myself over this?" he thought. "I'll just put in my time, giving just the minimum effort and that will be good enough."

And that he planned to do until one day he decided to make it a matter of prayer and take his troubled thoughts to God. "God", he said, "I have laboured long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock

by half a millimetre. What is wrong? Why am I failing?" God responded compassionately, "My friend, when I asked you to serve me and you accepted I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. And now you come to me, with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But, is that really so?" "Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewed and brown, your hands are callused from constant pressure, and your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. Yet you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. This you have done." "I, my friend, will now move the rock."

At times when we read the scriptures, we tend to use our own intellect to decipher what He wants, when actually what God wants is just simple obedience and faith in Him..... By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but it is still God who moves the mountains.

The greatest Success one can have is: "Working toward securing a place in Jehovah's New Arrangement."

ONE HORSE RACE

If two people each owned a horse, and each one believed their horse was better and faster than the other, how could such a dispute be settled? Simple - Let them race.

A lot of people may then hear about this big dispute, and become keenly interested. On race day the grandstands are filled with people curious about the outcome.

But what if shortly after the race begins, or at any time during the race, before the finish, one man was to pull out a gun and shoot the other horse and then go on to win the race. Would it be considered fair? Would anything be proved? Those in the grandstand would never really know which was the best horse. Perhaps they would even conclude that the shooter knew he would lose the race.

The race must go the full distance, right down to the finish line. Only then could it be decided which horse is clearly the better.

Jehovah could have 'shot' Satan right away. But what would the angels (people in the grandstands) have thought if he did? They may have questioned whether Satan could have ruled successfully, etc (could have won the race). They may have felt that God, by using his superior power (gun, killing), was acting unfairly. What was needed, then, to prove who had the right to rule, etc (whose horse was fastest?)? TIME! Jehovah God determined that he would allow Satan time to prove his claims (let the race go to the finish). Then, once and for all, everyone would know, fair and square, who's way of rule was best (who was the winner of the horse race.)"

PEP ?

Why does Jehovah allow us to struggle at times? There was a man that happen to find a cocoon. He kept it around to see what would happen. Finally the day came for the butterfly to come out. As he watched it wiggle and struggle he waited. First an hour then two, then three hours, finally he got tired of waiting and decided to help the butterfly. So he took a pair of scissors and cut the cocoon open, and out came the butterfly. But the butterfly never flew because it needed to build up the muscles in its wings and the way to do this, was by working its way out of the cocoon.

There are certain struggles we have to go through in life. Many of these struggles help us when we want to become a pioneer, ministerial servant, etc., It takes a lot of endurance, we need PEP. Persistence. Endurance. Perseverance.

PEOPLE DO WHAT YOU "SHOW THEM"

Ask your audience to imitate what you do. First put up one finger, than two,.. Than show them three. Make sure that they have three fingers up exactly as you do. Then ask your audience to make a circle by touching their index finger and thumb.

While you make the request, touch the side of your cheek with the circle you have made with your fingers. But ask them to touch their chin with the circle they have made with their fingers. You will notice your audience will follow what you are doing or how you show them and not what you have verbally asked them to do.

Thus instead of touching their chins with the circle that they have made, they instead will follow what you have just done and touch the side of their face or cheek. The application: We tend to follow or do what people show us.

Deeds are more impressive then words. So if the body of Elders or a pioneer talks about going out in the ministry. This is good,..... But the flock will readily follow or imitate your action of going out in the field rather than your words. If you talk from the platform about missing meetings, and you are one that is always at the meetings despite your own personal problems, then the flock will listen to you.

People more readily do what you show them rather than what you say.

JEHOVAH DOES ANSWER PRAYERS (3 Trees)

Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said "Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated with intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty." Then the second tree said "Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take kings and queens across the waters and sail to the corners of the world. Everyone will feel safe in me because of the strength of my hull." Finally the third tree said. "I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest tree in the forest. People will see me on top of the hill and look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will always remember me..."

After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon the trees. When one came to the first tree he said, "This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter." And he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.

At the second tree a woodsman said, "This looks like a strong tree, I should be able to sell it to the shipyard." The second tree was happy because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship. When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down his dreams would not come true. One of the woodsmen said, "I don't need anything special from my tree, so I'll take this one and store it." And he cut it down.

When the first tree arrived at the carpenters, he was made into a feed box for animals. He was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. This was not at all what he had prayed for. The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying kings had come to an end. The third tree was cut into large pieces and left alone in the dark. The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams.

Then one day, a man and woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a

crib for the baby, but this manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance of this event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man, and he stood and rebuked the storm and the storm stopped. At this time, the tree knew that it had carried the King of kings in its boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. The tree came to realize that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as was possible, because his Son Jesus had been impaled upon it.

The moral of this story is that when things don't seem to be going our way, always know that Jehovah God has a purpose for us. If we place our trust in Him, He will give us all the desires of our hearts. Each of the trees got what they wanted, just not in the way they had imagined. We may not always know what God has in mind for us. We just know that His ways are always best. Don't ever forget that.

POSITIVE

Once there was a boy who always looked on the bright side and always expected the best. He expected to like brussel sprouts before he ever tasted them, for instance, and to like his teacher on the first day of school. Because he had such a 'sunny outlook' on things, he was rarely disappointed. But the boy's father thought he wasn't realistic, so he decided to test him. One day he brought home MANY presents. All but ONE small one was for the boy's brother. The brother opened his gifts with glee, a train set, a toy robot, a cowboy outfit, even his OWN TV! Through all this, the boy smiled expectantly, confident the contents of his small box would equal the splendour of his brother's gifts. When it was his turn he ripped the box open to find only a pile of hay and some very smelly animal droppings.

To his father's astonishment, the boy clapped his hands with joy and ran immediately to the backyard. "Yippee!" he cried. "There must be a pony here somewhere!"

PUSH BEYOND OUR "MENTAL DRAGONS"

Centuries ago, when mapmakers ran out of the known world before they ran out of parchment, they would sketch a dragon at the edge of the scroll. This was a sign to the explorer that he was entering unknown territory at his own risk. Some explorers took this symbol literally and were afraid to venture outside the known and previously travelled areas. They were afraid to push onward. Some explorers saw the dragon as a sign of opportunity.

Each of us has a mental map of our own world in our heads. This map contains the information that we use to guide us in our day-to-day activities. Like maps of long ago, our mental maps have dragons around the outer edge. These represent things that, for whatever reason, we don't want to push beyond. It could be a fear of meeting new people, a fear of public speaking, a fear of being perceived as unworthy, or a fear of failure. Sometimes these dragons are valid. Sometimes however, they prevent us from discovering new worlds of satisfied accomplishment that presently are laying dormant within ourselves.

PRAY - EVEN IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

A little shepherd boy was watching his sheep one Sunday morning. As he heard the bells ringing the faithful to church, he watched the people walking along the lane next to the pasture. He began to think that he, too, would like to communicate with God. "But what can I say?" he thought. He had never learned a prayer.

So on bended knee, he began to recite the alphabet - A, B, C, D, and so on to Z, repeating his "prayer" several times.

A man passing by heard the boy's voice, and stopping to look through the bushes, saw the child kneeling with folded hands and closed eyes, saying, "J, K, L, M, ..."

He interrupted the boy, asking, "What are you doing, my little friend?"

The boy replied, "I was praying, sir."

Surprised, the man said, "But why are you reciting the alphabet?"

The child explained, "I don't know any prayers, sir. But I want God to take care of me and help me to care for the sheep. So, I thought if I said all I knew, He could put the letters together and spell all that I want to say and should say."

The man smiled and said, "Bless your heart. You're right - God will!" then went on to church, knowing he had already heard the finest sermon he could possibly hear that day.

Remember that Jesus told us to have faith like a child. When you go to God in prayer, don't worry if you don't know what to say. He can put your thoughts and feelings together and send you the answer you need, even when you don't know what you need.

QUOTES

"A good thing to remember, and a better thing to do, is work with the construction gang, and not with the wrecking crew."

"By the time a son realises that his father was right, he usually has a son who thinks he's wrong".

"If you are happy - let your face know it."

Love is like quicksilver in the hand. Leave the fingers open and it stays. Clutch it, and it darts away.

"People buy things they don't need; with money they don't have, to impress people they don't like".

"People don't care what you know till they know you care."

"The Bible is meant to be bread for our daily use, not cake for special occasions."

REAL OR IMAGINED

A farmer has two fields separated by a gate. In one field he has a flock of sheep, the other has none. The grass grows well in the vacant field and so in time it becomes necessary to transfer the sheep to the other field. So he opens the gate. Sheep have been known to stand next to open gate and not go in because they have become so used to the gate being there, that they believe the gate still to be closed. In frustration a farmer may put a dog behind the sheep to force them to enter the new field.

What happens? Some sheep will jump over the gate that is not there and enter the field. Once a few sheep go in the rest will follow.

At times we see barriers that are simply not there, they exist in our mind only, or we fail to realise that circumstances have changed. Even if we think the gate is still closed, why not jump anyway? On looking back we will realise that the way was open all the time. Many other 'sheep' have already entered new fields, why not join them? When offering advice or encouragement, make sure the 'sheep' believes he can enter or jump the gate, or you will sound like a barking dog behind the sheep, not a shepherd out in front.

RIGHT DIRECTION

A spiritual person is God-oriented. To orient a map, you need a compass. Adjust the compass to the North. Set the map to agree to the compass; the way things are on the face of the earth. There is a magnetic North. Science can't totally figure it out.

The map is God's Word. The compass is holy spirit. Without holy spirit you can't understand God's Word (without compass you can't orient a map). If a person doesn't orient himself with Jehovah he is a fleshly man, not spiritual. (1Co. 2:14) The physical person doesn't receive the spirit of God because holy spirit is not there. (1Co. 2:16). We can get to know Jehovah's thinking and Christ's if we are spiritual, through holy spirit. Jesus explains about Jehovah through the Scriptures. He learned about Jah and did his will. He followed exactly what he was told to do!

REMOVING THE OLD PERSONALITY IS LIKE USING PAINT STRIPPER

Ephesians 4:22, 23: "That you should put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct and which is being corrupted according to his deceptive desires; but that you should be made new in the force actuating your mind."

The verb, "put away"-- in the original Greek language is called the aorist tense. It indicates an action that is taken just once or once and for all. So it must be decisively (conclusively settled) stripped off.

To help you get the sense of this lets illustrate:

When one gives you advise on how to renovate your house, an antique, or a piece of old furniture, the worst words you can hear to solve the problem is: "The only thing you can do to make it right is to strip off the paint."

Why are these hated words? Well, have you ever used paint stripper? Do you know anyone who has ever told you that they like to strip ANYTHING? No one likes it. You get it on you. It burns. Splashes on your face or gets under the glove that you are using.. gooey, slippery, sludge. So why do we do it? Why do we subject ourselves to such torture? Because it is a necessity; there is no other alternative. It is the best solution. Why?

If it is not stripped completely you risk the new coating delaminating or peeling.

We have to do the same with our old personality. If we don't get it off completely, it will eventually cause our spirituality to delaminate. It is because, the old personality "is being corrupted" as the 'b' section of Eph. 4:22 indicates. Yes, the old personality is in a continuous course of moral degradation going from bad to worse, leading to defilement and death. So you have to get it off, like clothing that has the smell of a skunk!!!!!! Get it off!!! Would you keep your socks on? No, we take everything off the first chance we get.

SO IT IS URGENT THAT WE STRIP OFF THE OLD PERSONALITY!!

The scripture goes on to say in 4:23: "Be made new in the force actuating your mind" This force does not refer to Holy Spirit. It literally means "the spirit of the mind of you" This is the force that activates or actuates our mind, our own mental tendency and dominant inclination. So even if a person puts away the PRACTICES of the old personality, his sinful mental tendency, which, if left unchanged, will sooner or later compel him to return to what he abandoned.

That's why people who have tried to quit smoking, overdrinking, or other bad practices have relapses, because they did not thoroughly make over their mind.

It's like when you are stripping that piece of furniture and you have got all the white paint off, but there is still paint down in the grain. What are you going to do? You've got to use a strong force to get it out. So you use a brass brush or sometimes steel one.

So we need not only to strip off what's outside, but also to get inside to and strip out our sinful tendencies. Yes, the mind, the centre of perception and understanding, is where the renewal must begin.

The phrase, "Be made new", in the Greek text, is in the present tense, expressing continuous action.

So by continuing to study God's Word and by meditating on what it means, the actuating force can be made NEW. A new thought pattern will be built up, one that sees things from the viewpoint of God and Christ. 1Co 10:31 says: "Therefore, whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory".

All our actions will be for Jah's glory, even our thought patterns.

Only when we have finally reached this situation in life, will we have truly removed the old personality.

RASCAL THE RACCOON

A young boy (we'll call him Johnny), found a raccoon pup and raised him. He called his new pet Rascal. Rascal was very friendly and good company for Johnny, and he went everywhere with Johnny, even slept with him. Of course, Rascal was very curious, and as he grew up he became more and more curious and, sad to say, even destructive. He raided the neighbours' hen houses more than once, and the farmers began to get angry about Rascal's night-time excursions. So, Johnny was forced to put his pet in a cage to keep the farmers from killing him.

Johnny knew that Rascal would go crazy if he just imprisoned him all at once, so he devised a way to help Rascal get used to being in a cage. Johnny built the cage himself, and as he was building the cage he allowed Rascal to play with the wood and the wire and nails. As the frame went up Rascal could go in and out of the framework. It was a delightful game they played as the wire was attached to the wooden frame. Rascal followed Johnny around as he constructed each new part of the cage, climbing around and investigating every inch of what was to become his prison. Then Johnny built the door, and Rascal had fun going in and out of the door.

When the cage was finally finished, Rascal went inside, and Johnny shut the door. Rascal was so familiar with the cage that, even though he was now imprisoned, he didn't mind. The cage was now his home.

The moral of this story? Don't let Satan make a "Rascal" out of YOU!!

SALT OF THE EARTH

A king asked his three daughters how much they loved him. Two of them replied that they loved him better than all gold and silver in the world. The youngest one said she loved him better than salt.

The king was not pleased with her answer, as he thought salt was not very palatable. But the cook, overhearing the remark, put no salt in anything for breakfast next morning, and the meal was so insipid that the king could not enjoy it.

He then saw the force of his daughter's remark. She loved him so much, that nothing was good without him.

SHARPEN YOUR AXE

A young man approached the foreman of a logging crew and asked for a job. "That depends" replied the foreman. "Let's see you fell this tree." The young man stepped forward, and skilfully felled a great tree. Impressed, the foreman exclaimed, "You can start on Monday." Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday rolled by, and on Thursday afternoon the foreman approached the young man and said, "You can pick up your pay check on the way out today." Startled, the young man replied, "I thought you paid on Friday." "Normally we do," said the foreman. "But we're letting you go today because you've fallen behind. Our daily felling charts show that you've dropped from first place on Monday to last place today." "But I'm a hard worker," the young man objected. "I arrive first, leave last, and even have worked through my coffee breaks." The foreman, sensing the young man's integrity, thought for a minute and then asked, "Have you been sharpening your axe?" The young man replied, "No sir, I've been working too hard to take time for that."

THE APPLICATION? Our lives are like that. We sometimes get so busy that we don't take time to sharpen the axe. In today's world, it seems that everyone is busier than ever but less happy than ever. Why is that? Could it be that we have forgotten how to stay sharp?

There's nothing wrong with activity and hard work. But God doesn't want us to get so busy that we neglect the truly important things in life, like taking time to pray, to read and study Scripture, or to listen to the still small voice of God.

We all need time to relax, to think and meditate, to learn and grow. If we don't take time to sharpen the axe, we will become dull and lose our effectiveness.

SATAN'S GARAGE SALE

Once upon a time, Satan was having a garage sale. There, standing in little groups were all of his bright, shiny trinkets. Here were tools that make it easy to tear others down, for use as stepping stones. And over there were some lenses for magnifying one's own importance, which, if you looked through them the other way, you could also use to belittle others, or even one's self. Against the wall was the usual assortment of gardening implements guaranteed to help your pride grow by leaps and bounds: the rake of scorn, the shovel of jealousy for digging a pit for your neighbour, the tools of gossip and backbiting, of selfishness and apathy. All of these were pleasing to the eye and came complete with fabulous promises and guarantees of prosperity. Prices, of course, were steep; but not to worry! Free credit was extended to one and all. "Take it home, use it, and you won't have to pay until later!" old Satan cried, as he hawked his wares.

The visitor, as he browsed, noticed two well worn, non-descript tools standing in one corner. Not being nearly as tempting as the other items, he found it curious that these two tools had price tags higher than any other. When he asked why, Satan just laughed and said, "Well, that's because I use them so much. If they weren't so plain looking, people might see them for what they were." Satan pointed to the two tools, saying, "You see, that one's Doubt and that one's Discouragement - and those will work when nothing else will."

SIGNS OF THE TIME

Read this slowly - digest it thoroughly - IT IS SO TRUE.

We have taller buildings, but shorter tempers;

Wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints;

We spend more, but have less;

We buy more, but enjoy it less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families;

More conveniences, but less time;

We have more degrees, but less sense;

More knowledge, but less judgment;

More experts, but more problems;

More medicine, but less wellness.

We spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry too quickly, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too seldom, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.

We talk too much, love too seldom and lie too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life;

We've added years to life, not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbour.

We've conquered outer space, but not inner space;

We've done larger things, but not better things;

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul;

We've split the atom, but not our prejudice;

We write more, but learn less;

Plan more, but accomplish less.

We've learned to rush, but not to wait;

We have higher incomes; but lower morals;

More food but less appeasement;

More acquaintances, but fewer friends;

More effort but less success.

We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication;

We've become long on quantity, but short on quality.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion;

Tall men (& women), and short character;

Steep profits, and shallow relationships.

These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare;

More leisure and less fun;

More kinds of food, but less nutrition.

These are days of two incomes, but more divorce;

Of fancier houses, but broken homes.

These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one-night stands,

Overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the show window, and nothing in the storeroom.

Indeed it's all true. Think about it...read it again.

STAY CLOSE TO JEHOVAH'S ORGANIZATION

One day a young boy was riding in a horse drawn buggy down a country lane with his father. The father turns to the little boy and says watch this as he takes the buggy whip and gently flicks a bee off

a flower. Amazed, the little boy says, "Do that again." They start looking for a bee on a flower by the side of the road and shortly the father does it again. Truly amazed, the little boy says, "May I try it father?" The father hands the little boy the buggy whip and they start looking on either side of the road at the flowers for a bee. All of a sudden the little boy happens to look up and see a beehive with swarms of bees. Raising the whip, he prepares to strike.

Just in time the father looks up and sees what his young son is about to do. He quickly takes the whip and says, "No son, we don't bother with those, they're organized."

Moral of the story: When we leave Jehovah's organization, or miss a lot of meetings, we are like that little bee sitting all alone on a flower that Satan can come along and flick off. If we stay safe, within Jehovah's organization, Satan is less likely to try to pick us off, because he realizes that like that beehive, we are organized.

SOMETHING THE CAT DRAGGED IN

If you have a cat, you might know that they sometimes have a rather unpleasant habit of bringing dead birds and mice as "gifts" for their owners. Even though the cat thinks it's a tasty morsel, and probably expects its owner to be pleased and grateful for the offering, more than likely you know what the response will be. For the cat, the 'present' is something attractive, delicious. For the owner, it is disgusting, even nauseating.

We may like our religion, but we should examine it carefully to be sure our Owner, God, will find it to his liking!

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL

There was a sister noted for only saying good about everybody.

Once she was challenged that she couldn't say anything good about Satan the Devil.

She thought for a moment, and said, "He's a hard worker!"

If she could say something "good" about Satan, we should have no trouble saying good things about our brothers and sisters!

STEADY RAIN

The Bible is not meant for speed reading. If our mind and heart are like a garden, what sort of a garden would it be? Rocky and barren, or full of flowers and plant life? Bible reading without meditation is like a rain shower. It passes quickly and dries up, refreshing to the mind, but just for a moment. There is no lasting benefit. Bible reading with meditation, on the other hand, is like a steady rain that sinks into the mind and heart and stimulates spiritual growth. What kind of Bible reading do you do?

SURFING

If you are following the line of the sun moving across the earth, we can compare it to a Mexican Wave at a football game. As that line moves, brothers and sisters are getting up and starting to preach, while others at a different location are just going to bed.

Every time the wave passed around the earth in 1998, there were just over a thousand lives saved.

So catch the WAVE!! At the end of the day it is so encouraging to think, "We have a thousand more brothers today".

SURVIVAL KIT FOR EVERY DAY LIFE

1. TOOTHPICK...to remind you to pick the good qualities in everyone, including yourself.

2. RUBBER BAND...to remind you to be flexible. Things might not always go the way you want, but it can be worked out.
3. BAND-AID...to remind you to heal hurt feelings, either yours or someone else's.
4. ERASER...to remind you everyone makes mistakes. That's okay, we learn by our errors.
5. CANDY KISS...to remind you everyone needs a hug or a compliment everyday.
6. MINT...to remind you that you are worth a mint to your family.
7. BUBBLE GUM...to remind you to stick with it and you can accomplish anything.
8. PENCIL...to remind you to list your blessings every day.
9. TEA BAG...to remind you to take time to relax daily and go over that list of blessings. This is what makes life worth living every minute, every day.

THE CRACKED POT

A water bearer in India had two large pots hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots of water to his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream.

"I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts", the pot said. The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad, because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That is because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years, I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my Master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house." Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But if we will allow it, the Lord will use our flaws to grace His Father's table. In God's great economy, nothing goes to waste.

So, as we seek ways to minister together, and as God calls you to the tasks he has appointed for you, don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and allow Him to take advantage of them, and you too, can be the cause of beauty in His pathway. Go out boldly, knowing that in our weakness, we find His strength, and that "In him, every one of God's promises is a "Yes.""

THE PRESENT

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening the bank deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!!!!

Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow". You must live in the present on today's deposits.

Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today. To realize the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who failed a grade. To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby. To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper. To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet. To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who missed the train. To realize the value of ONE SECOND, ask a person who just avoided an accident. To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND, ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Treasure every moment that you have! And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time. And remember that time waits for no one. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it's called the present!!

[A THEOCRATIC GARDEN](#)

We should all be trying to cultivate a spiritual garden, which includes four vegetables, and five rows of each vegetable. The four vegetables are peas, squash, turnips, and lettuce.

Five Rows of Peas:

- Personal Study
- Preaching
- Preparation
- Perseverance
- Prayer

Five Rows of Squash:

- Squash gossip
- Squash jealousy
- Squash anger
- Squash contention
- Squash strife

Five Rows of Turnips:

- Turnip for the Service Meeting
- Turnip for the Theocratic Ministry School
- Turnip for the Book Study
- Turnip for the Public Talk
- Turnip for the Watchtower Study

Five Rows of Lettuce:

- Lettuce continue to show love for one another
- Lettuce continue to press on to maturity
- Lettuce keep ourselves without spot from the world
- Lettuce keep a strong hold on the word of life
- Lettuce do all we can to magnify Jehovah's name

[TORTURE STAKE](#)

We as Christians carry our torture stake, as Jesus said in Luke 14:27: "Whoever is not carrying his torture stake and coming after me cannot be my disciple."

To carry a torture stake is not a easy thing to do. Because a torture stake is 15 cm (6 in.) in diameter and 3.5 m (11 ft) long, it probably weighed little more than 45 kg (100 lb).

What might happen to us in our every day lives when we carry our stake? Maybe so, that after a while we wish to ease our burden by cutting the torture stake shorter. We may cut our stake 1 m shorter by leaving, for example, book studies from our weekly schedule. It does lighten our stake. And we go further. After sometime we feel that we have to cut more our stake. We might do so when we make choices that prevent us attending regularly the Theocratic Ministry School and Service Meeting. But still, we always attend Public Talk and Watchtower study every Sunday. Yes indeed, now our torture stake is rather easy to carry.

But what might happen to us in the future? Well, Armageddon will come. Think of a situation that we have endured until the final thing just before we can enter into paradise. The last thing to do before paradise is that we only have to cross a ravine that separates this old system and the new system. And guess how wide is the ravine? It is almost 3.5 m wide.

So, what do we need to do now that we can in future enter into Paradise?

PS. You can check the information of the torture stake from it-1 p. 1191 [Impalement]

TRIALS CAN SHAPE US

The story goes that a blacksmith had been experiencing unusual reversals in his life, although he was well known as a hard worker, diligent in all his efforts, and most considerate of others and generous to a fault. As a close friend sympathizing with him in some of his trials said: "It seems strange to me that so much affliction should pass your way, and of course, I don't want to weaken your faith in God or anything like that, but things seem to be getting steadily worse for you. I can't help wondering why that is."

The blacksmith did not answer immediately, and it was evident that he had thought the same question before. But finally, he said "You see here the raw iron which I have to make into horse's shoes. You know what I do with it? I take a piece and heat it in the fire until it is red, almost white with the heat. Then I hammer it unmercifully to shape it as I know it should be shaped. Then I plunge it into a pail of cold water to temper it. Then I heat it again and hammer it some more. And this I do until it is finished."

"But sometimes I find a piece of iron that won't stand up under this treatment. The heat and the hammering and the cold water are too much for it. I don't know why it fails in the process, but I know it will never make a good horse's shoe."

He pointed to a heap of scrap iron that was near the door of his shop. "When I get a piece that cannot take the shape and temper, I throw it out on the scrap heap. It will never be good for anything."

He went on, "I know that God has been permitting the fires of affliction and I have felt His hammer upon me. But I don't mind, if only He can bring me to what I should be. And so, in all these hard things my prayer is simply this: Try me in any way you wish, Lord, only don't throw me on the scrap heap."

THE TURNTABLE BRIDGE (oldie but goodie)

There once was a turntable bridge which spanned a large river. During most of the day the bridge sat with it's length running up and down the river parallel with the banks, to let the ships pass freely on both sides of the bridge. But at certain times each day, a train would come along, and the bridge would be turned sideways across the river, allowing the train to cross.

A switchman lived in a small shack on one side of the river where he operated the controls to turn the bridge and lock it into place as the train crossed.

One evening as the switchman was waiting for the last train to cross, he looked off into the distance through the dimming twilight, and caught sight of the train's light. He stepped to the controls and waited until the train was in prescribed distance before he was to turn the bridge. He turned the bridge into position, but to his horror, he found that the locking device didn't work! If the bridge was not locked securely into position, it would wobble back and forth at the ends when the train came onto it, causing the train to jump the track and go crashing into the river. This was a passenger train with many people on board.

He left the bridge turned across the river and hurried across the bridge to the other side of the river where there was a lever which he could use to operate the lock manually. He could hear the rumble of the train now, and took hold of the lever and leaned backwards to apply his weight to it, locking the bridge. He kept applying pressure to keep the mechanism locked. Many lives depended on his strength.

Then, coming across the bridge from the direction of his control shack, came a sound that made his blood run cold! "Daddy, where are you?".... His 4 year old son was crossing the bridge to look for him! His first impulse was to cry out to the child, "Run, Run!"....but the train was too close; the tiny legs would never make it across the bridge in time. The man almost left the lever to run and snatch up his son and carry him to safety, but he realized he could not get back to the lever in time. Either the people on the train or his little son must die.

He took just a moment to make his decision. The train sped swiftly and safely on its way, and no one was even aware of the tiny, broken body thrown mercilessly into the river below, by the on-rushing train. Nor were there any passengers who were aware of the pitiful figure of the sobbing man still clinging to the lever long after the train had passed. They didn't see him walking home slower than he had ever walked before to tell his wife how he had sacrificed their son.

Now if you can begin to comprehend the emotions that went through this man's heart, you can begin to understand the feelings of our Heavenly Father when He sacrificed His son to bridge the gap between us and eternal life. Can there be any wonder that He caused the skies to darken and the earth to quake when His son died? And how does He feel when we speed through life without a thought for what He has done for us by His Son, Jesus Christ? Billions today have no appreciation for the great sacrifice that was given in their behalf. How about you? When was the last time you thanked Him for the sacrifice of His Son?

THE POWERFUL TONGUE

A group of frogs were travelling through the woods, and two of them fell into a deep pit. All the other frogs gathered around the pit. When they saw how deep the pit was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead.

The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump up out of the pit with all of their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as dead.

Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying and gave up. He fell down and died. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made it out.

When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?" The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him the entire time.

This story teaches two lessons. There is power of life and death in the tongue. An encouraging word to someone who is down can lift them up and help them make it through the day. A destructive word to someone who is down can be what it takes to kill them.

THE BOOK OR THE MOVIE

Have you ever enjoyed a really good book? Perhaps it "grabbed hold of you" so that you were unable to put it down until you finished it. The book had a great plot, and kept you on the edge of your seat as the hero narrowly escaped many dangers.

Now suppose that, about a year after you finish reading this great book, you see that book has been made into a movie. So you go to see this movie, and as you watch it, you find that, unlike most book-to-movie translations, this movie is faithful to the book down to the finest detail!

In fact, the scary parts are just as scary as they were in the book. But while other movie-goers who have not read the book are grasping the armrests on their chairs, you aren't as afraid, because you've read the book, and you know exactly how the hero makes it out of this situation. In fact, as the movie progresses, others start to look at their watches to find out how much time is left in the movie, but you don't have to, because you've read the book, and you know where in relation to the ending you currently are, and thus how much time is left.

The end of this system of things is just like a movie and some of the parts are very scary. But while we may be "on the edge of our chairs" at times by what we see on the screen, we are not scared as the rest are; BECAUSE WE HAVE READ THE BOOK, AND THIS MOVIE IS FAITHFUL TO THE BOOK DOWN TO THE FINEST DETAIL.

We know where we are in the end of this system of things by what we see around us, because we've READ THE BOOK. We know what is going to happen next, because we've READ THE BOOK. We are not faint out of fear as the rest are, because we've READ THE BOOK.

THE ART OF COMMUNICATION

One evening a man and his wife called another couple to see what they were doing. Oh, said the other wife, we're just drinking coffee and talking. As she hung up the phone, she demanded, Why don't we ever do that? They're just drinking coffee and talking. Her husband said, "So make a pot of coffee." They sat with their freshly brewed coffee, just staring at each other in silence. "Well, call them back," he directed, "and find out what they're talking about."

THE BUILDER

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family. He would miss the pay check, but he needed to retire. They could get by. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favour. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

When the carpenter finished his work and the builder came to inspect the house, the contractor handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you."

What a shock! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. Now he had to live in the home he had built none too well.

So it is with us. We build our lives in a distracted way, reacting rather than acting, willing to put up less than the best. At important points we do not give the job our best effort. Then with a shock we look at the situation we have created and find that we are now living in the house we have built. If we had realized, we would have done it differently.

Think of yourself as the carpenter. Think about your house. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall, build wisely. It is the only life you will ever build. Even if you live it for only one day more, that day deserves to be lived graciously and with dignity. The plaque on the wall says, "Life is a do-it-yourself project." Who could say it more clearly? Your life today is the result of your attitudes and choices in the past. Your life tomorrow will be the result of your attitudes and the choices you make today.

THE FOX AND THE RABBIT

There once was a fox and a rabbit. Naturally, the fox fancied the rabbit for a bit of a meal, so he hid, waiting for the rabbit to come by, which is what eventually happened.

The fox jumped out of his hiding place, and said with a smile, "Good afternoon, Dinner!"

Without a word, the rabbit turned and was away in a blinding flash.

The fox, not to be done out of his plan so easily, immediately gave chase. The rabbit ran as he had never run before. He ran under fences, he ran through bushes, he ran in and out of hollow logs, he even ran through the culvert under the road.

The fox ran right behind the rabbit, so close that several times the rabbit felt the fox's hot breath on his tail.

Eventually, the fox began to tire out, and consequently gave up the chase. But the rabbit ran until he was well out of sight, and then he ran a little further. Without a doubt, the rabbit was also very tired. In fact, he had never been so tired in all his life. But you see, the rabbit was running for his life - the fox was only running for his next meal.

So, next time you feel tired out, remember that Satan is running for a meal, but you are running for your life!

THE MAN, THE BOY, AND THE DONKEY

A man and his son were once going with their donkey to market. As they were walking along by it's side, a countryman passed them and said: "You fools, what is a donkey for but to ride upon?" So the man put the boy on the donkey and they went on their way. But soon they passed a group of men, one of whom said, "See that lazy youngster. He lets his father walk while he rides." So the man ordered his boy to get off, and got on himself. But they hadn't gone far when they passed two women, one of whom said to the other, "Shame on that lazy lout to let his poor little son trudge along like that."

Well, the man didn't know what to do, but at last he took his boy up before him on the donkey. By this time they had come to the town, and the passers-by began to jeer and point at them. The man stopped and asked what they were scoffing at. The men said: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself for overloading that poor donkey with yourself and your hulking son?"

The man and boy got off and tried to think what to do. They thought and they thought, till at last they cut down a pole, tied the donkey's feet to it, and raised the pole and the donkey to their shoulders. They went along amid the laughter of all who met them till they came to Market Bridge, when the

donkey, getting one of his feet loose, kicked out and caused the boy to drop his end of the pole. In the struggle the donkey fell over the bridge, and due to his fore-feet being tied together he drowned.

"That will teach you," said an old man who had followed them.

"Please all, and you will please none, least not yourself."

Seek to please Jehovah.

THE TEEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Don't let your parents down. They brought you up.
2. Choose your companions with care. You become what they are.
3. Be master of your habits or they will master you.
4. Treasure your time. Don't spend it, invest it.
5. Stand for something or you'll fall for anything.
6. Select only a date that will make a good mate.
7. See what you can do for others, not what others can do for you.
8. Guard your thoughts. What you think, is what you are.
9. Don't fill up on the crumbs of this old world. Fill your heart on the Living Word.
10. Give your all to God by dedication. He gave his Son for you.

THE TREASURE

The cheerful girl with bouncy golden curls was almost five. Waiting with her mother at the checkout stand, she saw them: a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box.

"Oh please, Mommy. Can I have them? Please, Mommy, please!"

Quickly the mother checked the back of the little foil box and then looked back into the pleading blue eyes of her little girl's upturned face. "One pound ninety-five. That's almost £2.00 If you really want them, I'll think of some extra chores for you and in no time you can save enough money to buy them for yourself."

As soon as Jenny got home, she emptied her penny bank and counted out 17 pennies. After dinner, she did more than her share of chores and she went to the neighbour and asked Mrs. McJames if she could pick dandelions for ten pence. Jenny's grandma gave her another new pound coin as a surprise gift and at last she had enough money to buy the necklace.

Jenny loved her pearls. They made her feel dressed up and grown up. She wore them everywhere - to school, Christian meetings, around the house, even to bed. The only time she took them off was when she went swimming or had a bubble bath. Mother said if they got wet, they might turn her neck green.

Jenny had a very loving daddy and every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. One night when he finished the story, he asked Jenny, "Do you love me?"

"Oh yes, Daddy. You know that I love you."

"Then give me your pearls."

"Oh, Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have Princess - the white horse from my collection. The one with the pink tail. Remember, Daddy? The one you gave me. She's my favourite."

"That's okay, Honey. Daddy loves you. Good night." And he brushed her cheek with a kiss.

About a week later, after the story time, Jenny's daddy asked again, "Do you love me?"

"Daddy, you know I love you."

"Then give me your pearls."

"Oh Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for a gift. She is so beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her sleeper."

"That's okay. Sleep well. God bless you, little one. Daddy loves you." And as always, he brushed her cheek with a gentle kiss.

A few nights later when her daddy came in, Jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed Indian-style. As he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her cheek. "What is it, Jenny? What's the matter?" Jenny didn't say anything but lifted her little hand up to her daddy. And when she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace. With a little quiver, she finally said, "Here, Daddy. It's for you."

With tears gathering in his own eyes, Jenny's kind daddy reached out with one hand to take the dime-store necklace, and with the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine pearls and gave them to Jenny.

He had had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to give up the dime-store stuff so he could give her genuine treasure. So like our heavenly Father, Jehovah!

What are you hanging on to?

Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. - Matthew 6:19-21

THE WORKER

Once there was a man who worked for a construction company. He always tried to do exactly what his employer wanted. He arrived for work on time, and never took 'extended' morning tea or lunch breaks. One day after his morning break he got up and started work, picking up a large piece of timber to take to the worksite.

Some of the workers completely ignored him.

Some of the others started to give him a hard time.

Some said, "Take it easy, come back here and sit with us. You don't need to do that now."

Others shouted, "That's no way to carry a piece of timber by yourself, you need to balance it better!"

Others thought he was just trying to impress the boss, and trying to make them look bad.

Our Pioneers, Ministerial Servants and Elders and others are trying to do what our employer, Jehovah God wants.

We can ignore, discourage, criticise, or impute wrong motives.

Or we can get up, reach out and help them carry the load.

THE TEACUP

There was a couple who used to go to England to shop in the beautiful stores.

They both liked antiques and pottery and especially teacups. This was their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. One day in this beautiful shop they saw a beautiful teacup. They said, "May we see that? We've never seen one quite so beautiful." As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the teacup spoke.

"You don't understand," it said. "I haven't always been a teacup. There was a time when I was red, and I was clay. My master took me and rolled me and patted me over and over and I yelled out, 'let me alone, but he only smiled, 'Not yet.'

"Then I was placed on a spinning wheel," the teacup said, "and suddenly I was spun around and around and around. Stop it! I'm getting dizzy! I screamed. But the master only nodded and said, 'Not yet.'

Then he put me in the oven. I never felt such heat. I wondered why he wanted to burn me, and I yelled and knocked at the door. I could see him through the opening, and I could read his lips as He shook his head, 'Not yet.'

Finally the door opened, he put me on the shelf, and I began to cool. There, that's better,' I said. And he brushed and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible. I thought I would gag. 'Stop it, stop it!' I cried.

He only nodded, 'Not yet.' Then suddenly he put me back into the oven, not like the first one. This was twice as hot, and I knew I would suffocate. I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. All the time I could see him through the opening nodding his head saying, 'Not yet. 'Then I knew there wasn't any hope. I would never make it. I was ready to give up. But the door opened, and he took me out and placed me on the shelf. One hour later he handed me a mirror and said, 'Look at yourself. And I did. I said, 'That's not me; that couldn't be me. It's beautiful. I'm beautiful. "I want you to remember, then, he said, 'I know it hurts to be rolled and patted, but if I had left you alone, you'd have dried up.

I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I knew it hurt and was hot and disagreeable in the oven, but I hadn't put you there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted you all over, but if I hadn't done that, you never would have hardened; you would not have had any colour in your life. And if I hadn't put you back in that second oven, you wouldn't survive for very long because the hardness would not have held. Now you are a finished product. You are what I had in mind when I first began with you.

Jehovah God knows what He's doing (for all of us). He is the Potter, and we are His clay. He will mould us and make us, so that we may be made into a flawless piece of work to fulfil His good, pleasing, and perfect will. No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And Jehovah is faithful; he will not tempt you beyond what you can bear... 1 Corinthians 10:13

THE PICTURE OF PEACE

There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who could paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them. One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for

peaceful towering mountains were all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The other picture had mountains too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, in which lightening played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all.

But when the King looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest... perfect peace.

Which picture do you think won the prize? The King chose the second picture. Do you know why? "Because," explained the King, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace.

TWO THINGS NOT TO WORRY ABOUT

In my life, I have found there are two things about which I should never worry. First, I shouldn't worry about the things I can't change. If I can't change them, worry is certainly most foolish and useless. Second, I shouldn't worry about the things I can change. If I can change them, then taking action will accomplish far more than wasting my energies in worry. Besides, it is my belief that, 9 times out of 10, worrying about something does more danger than the thing itself. Give worry its rightful place - out of your life.

TLC

Children are like a plant. Just keep watering and being tender and giving what is best for them at the time. Don't keep pulling up the plant to see if the roots are taking hold. Just be patient. In time our children will fully bloom, beautiful to us and to our God.

TOO OLD TO CHANGE

Think of a vintage vehicle that sits gleaming in a showroom or museum. Imagine the attention to detail, the thousands of hours spent in restoring it to its present condition, perhaps because someone saw it rusting away under a tree and could see its potential.

Or perhaps it is a beautiful piece of antique furniture, or a building such as the Stanley Theatre. In the latter case, Jehovah's people saw its potential, and spent many hours on its restoration.

Now, if people can do that for material things, are we prepared to put that amount of time and effort into our own spirit, to create a refined, self-sacrificing attitude in ourselves?

THE ONLY WAY OUT IS UP

If you put a buzzard in a pen six or eight feet square and entirely open at the top, the bird, in spite of his ability to fly, will be an absolute prisoner. The reason is that a buzzard always begins a flight from the ground with a run of ten or twelve feet. Without space to run, as is his habit, he will not even attempt to fly, but will remain a prisoner for life in a small jail with no top.

The ordinary bat that flies around at night, a remarkably nimble creature in the air, cannot take off from a level place. If it is placed on the floor or flat ground, all it can do is shuffle about helplessly and, no doubt, painfully, until it reaches some slight elevation from which it can throw itself into the air. Then, at once, it takes off like a flash.

A bumblebee, if dropped into an open tumbler will be there until it dies, unless it is taken out. It never sees the means of escape at the top, but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom. It will seek a way where none exists, until it completely destroys itself.

In many ways, there are lots of people like the buzzard, the bat, and the bee. They are struggling about with all their problems and frustrations, not realizing that the answer is right there above them.

The Psalmist said, "I shall raise my eyes to the mountains. From where will my help come? My help is from Jehovah (Ps 121:1, 2) Our best source of help is just above us, but we need to look up and ask.

THE AGATE ROCK

Picture a thin piece of agate rock held up to the light. As you look at it you see the wonder of it. You see the awesome beauty of the swirls and striations.

When I was visiting a rock store in Arizona, I was looking through all the thin slices of agate, each different and unique in its beauty. As I was holding them up to the light, a sales lady walked over to me and said that I reminded her of another woman who had come in many months before. She proceeded to tell me this experience which has helped me through many of my times of trouble:

A woman came in and for a couple of hours was going through the many slices of agate, holding them up to the light to admire their beauty. Eventually the sales woman went over to her to ask if there was anything in particular she was looking for.

"No", said the woman, " I am just enjoying looking at these pieces of agate because, I realize that it was by means of pressure and fire that these things of such incredible beauty were created. You see, I have been going through some very severe trials in my life, and by looking at these pieces of agate, I realize that it is by means of the pressures of life and the fires of tribulation that God will create something beautiful in me and for me."

TRUST DAD

This is a true story about a little girl. There was a fire in her building in Harlem. She was up on the fourth floor at a window and the firemen couldn't get to her, so they spread out nets, and they were yelling for her to jump, but she would not listen to them. It turns out she was blind and couldn't see the net and was afraid to jump. When her father got there he called out to her to jump. Hearing her Dad's voice, she jumped and was totally relaxed. So relaxed that she not only didn't break a bone but also didn't even strain a muscle. We can compare this illustration to our relationship with our heavenly Father. We should have complete and total trust in Jehovah's instructions and just do them.

TRUST IN JEHOVAH

One of the most scary experiences for a rock-climber is the first time he has to rappel down a cliff. The difficulty does not originate with the technical aspect of the rappelling itself. The uncomfortable techniques used twenty years ago have been replaced by highly efficient and very secure gear made of reliable and extremely resistant materials. The difficulty is that, to begin the rappelling, one has to lean backwards toward the cliff and let his whole body weight hang onto the rope, using the legs to push oneself away from the wall! If he tries to stay close to the wall, he will slip and fall against the wall, with possible serious injuries. Yet in such a position, the individual has no grip whatsoever on the rock and is quite vulnerable and dependent on the gear. Many say they'll never do such a thing because they're too scared by the thought of falling off due to some gear failure. So the instructor will spend time explaining that a rope is made with a triple lining, how the harness can support a weight of three tons, how the python sealed in the rock can resist to a pulling force of ten tons, how the hooks can secure a falling weight of up to five tons, until the scared-to-death candidate gains trust in the gear. The more he knows about the gear, the less rappelling down a cliff, regardless of how high it is, appears to be dangerous or risky.

THE SOCCER GAME

I was watching some little kids play soccer. These kids were only five or six years old, but they were playing a real game - a serious game - two teams, complete with coaches, uniforms, and parents. I didn't know any of them, so I was able to enjoy the game without the distraction of being anxious about winning or losing - I only wished the parents and coaches could have done the same. The teams were pretty evenly matched. I will just call them Team One and Team Two.

Nobody scored in the first period. The kids were hilarious. They were clumsy and terribly inefficient, as only children can be. :-) They fell over their own feet, they stumbled over the ball, they kicked at the ball and missed it, but they didn't seem to care they were having fun!

In the second period, the Team One coach, pulled out what must have been his first team players and put in the scrubs; with the exception of his best player, who he left at goalie. The game took a dramatic turn. I guess winning is important even when you are five years old, because the Team Two coach left his best players in; the Team One scrubs were just no match for them.

Team Two swarmed around the little guy at goalie. He was an outstanding athlete for five, but he was no match for three or four who were equally as good. Team Two began to score. The lone goalie gave it his all. Recklessly throwing his body in front of incoming balls, trying valiantly to stop them.

Team Two scored two quick points in succession. It infuriated the young boy. He became a raging maniac - shouting, running, and diving. With all the stamina he could muster, he finally was able to cover one of the boys as he approached the goal. But, that boy kicked the ball to another boy twenty feet away, and by the time the young goalie repositioned himself, it was too late.

They scored a third goal. I soon learned who the goalie's parents were. They were nice, decent-looking people. I could tell that his dad had just come from the office, tie and all. They yelled encouragement to their son. I became totally absorbed, watching the boy on the field, and his parents on the sideline. After the third goal, the little kid changed.

He could see it was no use; he couldn't stop them. He didn't quit, but he became quietly desperate - futility was written all over his face. His father changed too. He had been urging his son to try harder - yelling advice and encouragement. But then he changed; he became anxious. He tried to say that it was okay to hang in there. He grieved for the pain his son was feeling.

After the fourth goal, I knew what was going to happen. I've seen it before. The little boy needed help so badly, and there was no help to be had. He retrieved the ball from the net and handed it to the referee - and then he cried. He just stood there while huge tears rolled down both cheeks. He went to his knees, I saw his father start onto the field.

His wife clutched his wrist and said, "Jim, don't. You'll embarrass him." But, he tore loose from her and ran onto the field. He wasn't supposed to for the game was still in progress. Suit, tie, dress shoes, and all - he charged onto the field and he picked up his son so everybody would know that this was his boy. And he hugged him and kissed him and cried with him. I have never been so proud of any man in my life. He carried him off the field, and when they got close to the sidelines I heard him say, "Scotty, I'm so proud of you. You were great out there. I want everybody to know that you are my son."

"Daddy," the boy sobbed, "I couldn't stop them. I tried, Daddy, I tried and tried and they scored on me." "Scotty, it doesn't matter how many times they score on you. You're my son, and I'm proud of you. I want you to go back out there and finish the game. I know you want to quit, but you can't. And son, you're going to get scored on again, but it doesn't matter. Go on, now."

It made a difference - I could tell it did. When you're all alone, and you're getting scored on - and you can't stop them - it means a lot to know that it doesn't matter to those who love you. The little guy ran back on to the field, and they scored two more times; but it was okay.

I get scored on every day. I try so hard. I recklessly throw my body in every direction. I fume and rage. I struggle with temptation and sin with every ounce of my being - and Satan laughs. And he scores again, and the tears come, and I go to my knees; sinful, convicted, helpless.

Then my Father rushes right out on the field - right in front of the whole crowd - the whole jeering laughing world, and he picks me up. And he hugs me, and he says, "I am so proud of you. You were great out there. I want everybody to know that you are my child.

Isaiah 41:10, 13

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

Its not a head full of knowledge and answers, but a heart full of love that moves us to live up to our dedication to Jehovah.

One should engage the brain before releasing the mouth to speak.

Never ! never! put a question mark where Jehovah has put a period.

When experiencing trials remember Jehovah did not remove the Red Sea, he made the way out for the Israelites to cross it.

The test of our faith is our eagerness to proclaim the good news.

Jehovah will supply, but we must apply.

Be not like the rooster who thought the sun rose 'to hear him crow'

We dare not violate the law of love any more than we can defy the law of gravity

It is not our position but our disposition that makes us happy.

A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.

If there were not so many of me , I would know myself better

The emphasis Jesus placed on a Christian's loving his neighbour helps one to avoid the danger that every time a person thinks he will be thinking of himself

Some people insist that they do not tell lies, yet they scheme to present the truth in such a way that no one recognizes it.

Deliverance into God's new order will mean living in perfect health and happiness in a delightful garden-like earth, under one government earth wide

What should not be heard by little ears should not be said by big mouths

Hearing truth and not accepting it does not change truth into error.

The learning and knowledge that we have is at most but little compared with that of which we are ignorant.

In the book "The Nations Shall Know that I am Jehovah"- How ?, one of the many reasons given for Jehovah's wrath against Christendom is: "Jehovah hates being treated by religious hypocrites like a God who can be fooled."

The scriptures are a storehouse of happiness that enriches the mind and heart. So read it everyday for the sheer pleasure of it.

Sin is not in things but in the wrong use of things.

Jehovah listens to our hearts rather than our lips.

The best human relations can be obtained if we live by the advice we give to others.

UNITY IS BEAUTIFUL

It is half past ten on Saturday night. I just came back from a walk in the clouds of snow! The first flakes landed yesterday and kept the scenery white for a few hours, and then started to melt. We thought this would be as usual our one-day scenario. Yet it started to snow again late last night. Apart from a few hours break around noon, it did not stop snowing, laying a beautiful white carpet on the whole country. A great opportunity for a walk in the park nearby our house! The lake was almost completely frozen and a few ducks were gathered on the small sheltered area where cold would not bite. Just a handful of people had decided to walk around the lake. The trail was nearly immaculate as the footprints were quickly covered. Each step made the characteristically crispy sound of compacted snow. Night's darkness seemed to be kept at a distance as the white decor reflected every bit of light. The branches of the trees were as if dressed with delicate lace. As the intensity of the snow fall increased, my sight got blurred. The details of the landscape faded as millions of cotton-like crystals floated their way down to earth. I couldn't help but stop, sit down on a bench and admire the spectacle.

Had it been one degree warmer, it would have rained; one degree cooler, it would only have been cold and humid. The temperature was just right for this phenomenon called snow to occur.

Jehovah is creating the circumstances that are just right for his purpose to be accomplished. Millions of people are now covering the earth with their Bible-based message reflecting divine glory and shining in this spiritually bedarkened world. Every single of these proclaimers is unique and beautiful, just like a snowflake. If they were by themselves, snowflakes would immediately melt, yet because of their united action, they hold firm together. The effect of this united work of doing God's will accomplished by this cloud of witnesses beautifies formerly spiritually dead-looking people and clothes them with a white attire, an approved standing in Jehovah's eyes. How refreshing their sounding out the Good News is! How beautiful the view of these faithful servants of the only true God! Let us make sure never to be blind to the beauty of Jehovah's purpose and the way it unfolds. Let us have a share in beautifying those in need of the Good News in our territory.

USE IT OR LOSE IT!

The Scripture in Hebrews 5:14 is quite familiar to us; that mature people have their perceptive powers trained through "use". This implies constant attention to staying active with the spiritual tools and talents available to each of us. But what happens when we slow down in the application of spiritual principles and guidelines in our lives, or become lazy and unproductive?

Let me tell you a story:

A Spanish philosopher tells about the Roman aqueduct at Segovia, in his native Spain. It was built in 109 A.D. For eighteen hundred years, it carried cool water from the mountains to the hot and thirsty city. Nearly sixty generations of men drank from its flow.

Then came the present generation. One man said, "This aqueduct is so great a marvel that it ought to be preserved for our children as a museum piece. We shall relieve it of its centuries-long labour."

They did. They laid modern iron pipes. They gave the ancient bricks and mortar a reverent rest. And the aqueduct began to fall apart. The sun beating on the dry mortar caused it to crumble. The bricks and stone sagged and threatened to fall. What ages of service could not destroy, idleness disintegrated.

Here's another story:

The great violinist, Nicolo Paganini, willed his marvellous violin to Genoa, the city of his birth, but only on condition that the instrument never be played. It was an unfortunate condition, for it is a peculiarity of wood that as long as it is used and handled, it shows little wear. As soon as it is discarded, it begins to decay.

The exquisite, mellow-toned violin has become worm-eaten in its beautiful case, valueless except as a relic. The mouldering instrument is a reminder that a life withdrawn from all service to others loses its meaning.

Good reasons then, to carefully consider the necessary actions listed in 2 Peter 1:5-8 that when applied, will "prevent (us) from being either inactive or unfruitful regarding the accurate knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

WALDO THE DUCK

Waldo was one of six new ducklings just born. After a few weeks the mother duck decides its time to take her troop for a walk to a more secure pond. Part of the journey involved crossing a road that wasn't often visited by cars, but the remote possibility existed. So it was imperative that all the little ducklings stay close behind Mum, not being distracted. All the little ducklings were nervous and attentive and stayed very close behind Mum, but Waldo had the tendency to be easily distracted by the things he saw around him. As Mum was crossing the road, all the other ducks got safely across because they were focused on keeping up with Mum. But Waldo, lagging far behind because of distractions, was crushed by a speeding truck!

Stay close to Jehovah and his organization, and do not let the distractions of the world cause you to lose your focus, causing you to lag behind, and be caught unaware, thus jeopardizing your life!

WARMTH

A young boy while visiting his grandfather in the country, found a small turtle and promptly attempted to examine it. The turtle just promptly closed its shell like a vice. Whereupon the boy seized a stick and tried in vain to pry the shell open. Observing the boy's actions, the Grandfather quickly interrupted. "That's not the way," he said. "Let me show you how." Taking the turtle into the house, he set it on the hearth. In a few minutes the creature began to grow warm, stuck out its head and feet and started to crawl. "Turtles are something like people," said the old man. "Never try to force a fellow into anything----Just warm him up a little ordinary human kindness, and more than likely he'll come your way."

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin-5, Ryan-3. The boys begin to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, "Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait." Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus."

WHAT IF?

What if God couldn't take the time to bless us today because we couldn't take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we did not follow Him today?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain?

What if God didn't walk with us today because we failed to recognize it as His day?

What if God took away the Bible tomorrow because we would not read it today?

What if God took away His message because we failed to listen to His messenger?

What if the door of the Hall was closed because we did not open the door of our heart?

What if God stopped loving and caring for us because we stopped caring for others?

What if God would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him yesterday?

What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call for service?

What if God met our needs the way we give Him our lives?

WHEELBARROW

The crowds at the circus watched with amazement and awe as the high-wire artist worked high over their heads. He crossed that stretch of wire with an ease that belied the fact that one mis-step could be his last. He worked the pole for balance, then used just an umbrella. The eyes of the crowd were locked on to him. Then he grabbed a rope, and dropped down to ground level. He walked up to a wheelbarrow on the edge of the ring. He faced the audience and asked, "Do you believe that I can cross that wire with this?" "YES!" Shouted the crowd. "Do you have faith that I can safely push this on the wire?"

"YES!" The crowd called out again.

The high wire artist, spotting a man that had shouted louder than the rest, addressed him, "Sir, do you have faith that I can do this?"

"Yes! You're the greatest" he replied.

"Then get in the wheelbarrow"

Many people say that they believe in God and the Christ. Many will even acknowledge that Jehovah's Witnesses have the truth. But they don't want to "get in the wheelbarrow", to put their lives on the line because of their faith.

Jesus is pushing the barrow. We all need to get in together. Jesus will give us balance and direction across the tightrope of this system.

WHICH RELATIONSHIP?

There was an attractive young sister, who was in her early 20's and a regular pioneer. She had decided that she was ready to find a mate and get married. One day in field service, she was working door-to-door and found herself witnessing to a handsome young man. There was a romantic "spark" between them, and he took the magazines. Upon returning with an elder, a Bible study was started. In time, the spark grew to be a viable attraction between them. The young man progressed, dedicating his life to Jehovah, getting baptized, and immediately enrolled as an auxiliary pioneer.

One day, the two were working together in a group out in service. It was a very hot day, and particularly discouraging. A number of angry householders had been encountered, etc. That afternoon, the two were approaching their car after making a call. Near the parked car was a river. The young sister in exasperation proclaimed, "I've had enough!!!" and tossed her book bag into the river. The young man did the same. The sister looked at him, and said to the young man, "That's all I needed to know."

WHO 'DUNNIT'?

Once upon a time, there were four people; their names were Anybody, Somebody, Nobody and Everybody.

Whenever there was an important job to be done, Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. When Nobody did it, Everybody got angry because it was Anybody's job. Everybody thought that Somebody would do it, but Nobody realized that Nobody would do it. So, consequently, Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done in the first place.

WHY I STOPPED ATTENDING FOOTBALL MATCHES

The people I had to sit with didn't seem very friendly.
The seats were too hard and not comfortable.
The coach never came to call on me.
The referee made some decisions I couldn't agree with.
Some of the other spectators were hypocrites.
Some games went overtime and I was late getting home.
The games are scheduled when I have other things to do.
My parents took me to too many games when I was growing up.
Since I read a book on sports, I feel that I know more than the coaches anyhow.
I don't want to take my children, because I want them to choose for themselves what team they support.
Do we ever catch ourselves falling into the same habit of making excuses.
Let us "not forsake the gathering of ourselves together."

WEATHERING THE STORMS

The ancient Vikings built ships that were renowned for their strength and ability to withstand the storm of cold northern seas. The planks which went into the keel were important, but most important of all was the mainmast, for it was the strength of this that meant surviving the storm or being lost at sea. George Sanchez explains the secret of their unusual strength, saying, "They had learned it wasn't good enough to simply find any tree of the right height and circumference [for a mast]. Instead, they searched for trees with the correct dimensions that had grown on sites exposed to the storms

blowing in from the open sea. Because the trees from exposed areas had withstood the buffeting of rough weather over the years, they were stronger and more flexible than trees from sheltered sites."

Did you notice that the ancient Vikings found that the masts with the greatest strength were the ones that had weathered the storms? The fact of the matter is that conflict, trials, adversity, and challenges in our lives....and our rising above these to still "grow" and stand tall, makes us more valuable. Its not so much the storm, as to how we survive it. Its a refining and purifying of the individual to have endured trials, and overcome the "storms". Even Christ "learned obedience by the things he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). May we also rise to the full height of our Christian potential as full grown "trees", tried and tested.

WHAT COMES AROUND GOES AROUND

He was driving home one evening, on a two-lane country road. This small Midwestern community, was almost as slow as his beat-up Pontiac. But he never quit looking for a job since his factory closed. Ever since he'd been unemployed, and with winter raging on, the chill had finally hit home. It was a lonely road. Not very many people had a reason to be on it, unless they were leaving. Most of his friends had already left. They had families to feed and dreams to fulfil. But he stayed on. After all, this was where he buried his mother and father. He was born here and knew the country. He could go down this road blind, and tell you what was on either side, and with his headlights not working, that came in handy.

It was starting to get dark and light snow flurries were coming down. He'd better get a move on. You know, he almost didn't see the old lady, stranded on the side of the road. Even in the dim light of day, he could see she needed help. So he pulled up in front of her Mercedes and got out. His Pontiac was still sputtering when he approached her. Even with the smile on his face, she was worried. No one had stopped to help her in the last hour or so. Was he going to hurt her? He didn't look safe, he looked poor and hungry. He could see that she was frightened, standing out there in the cold. He knew how she felt. It was that chill only fear could put in you. He said, "I'm here to help you ma'am. why don't you wait in the car where it is warm. By the way, my name is Joe."

Well, all she had was a flat tire, but for an old lady, that was bad enough. Joe crawled under the car looking for a place to put the jack, skinning his knuckles a time or two. Soon he was able to change the tire. But he had to get dirty and his hands hurt. As he was tightening up the lug nuts, she rolled down her window and began to talk to him. She told him that she was from St. Louis and was only passing through. She couldn't thank him enough for coming to her aid. Joe just smiled as he closed her trunk.

She asked him how much she owed him. Any amount would have been alright with her. She had already imagined all the awful things that could have happened had he not stopped. Joe never thought twice about the money. This was not a job to him.

This was helping someone in need, and God knows there were plenty who had giving him a hand in the past. He had lived his whole life that way, and it never occurred to him to act any other way. He told her that if she really wanted to pay him back, the next time she saw someone who needed help, she could give that person the assistance that they needed., and Joe added " ... and think of me."

He waited until she started her car and drove off. It had been a cold and depressing day, but he felt good as he drove home, disappearing into the twilight. A few miles down the road the lady saw a small cafe. She went in to grab a bit to eat, and take the chill off before she made the last leg of her trip home. It was a dingy looking restaurant. Outside were two old gas pumps. The whole scene was unfamiliar to her. The cash register was like the telephone out of an out of work actor that didn't ring much. Her waitress came over and brought a clean towel to wipe off her wet hair. She had a sweet smile, one that even being on her feet all day couldn't erase. The lady noticed that the waitress was

nearly eight months pregnant, but she never let the strain and aches change her attitude. The old lady wondered how someone who had so little could be so giving to a stranger. Then she remembered Joe.

After the lady finished her meal, and the waitress went to get her change for a hundred dollar bill, the lady slipped right out the door. She was gone by the time the waitress came back. She wondered where the lady could be, Then she noticed something written on a napkin. There were tears in her eyes, when she read what the lady had wrote. It said, "You don't owe me anything. I've been there too. Someone once helped me out, the way I am helping you. If you really want to pay me back, here's what you do. Don't let the chain of love end with you."

Well, there were tables to clear, sugar bowls to fill, and people to serve, but the waitress made it through another day. That night when she got home from work and climbed into bed, she was thinking about the money and what the lady had written. How could she know how much her and her husband needed it? With the baby due next month, it was going to be hard.

She knew how worried her husband was, and he lay asleep next to her, she gave him a soft kiss and whispered soft and low, "Everything's gonna be alright; I love you, Joe."

WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY

Falling in love. Laughing so hard your face hurts. A hot shower. A special glance. Getting mail. Taking a drive on a pretty road. Hearing your favourite song on the radio. Lying in bed listening to the rain outside. Hot towels out of the dryer. Walking out of your last final. Finding the sweater you want is on sale for half price. A chocolate milkshake. Getting invited to a dance. A bubble bath. Giggling. A good conversation. The beach. Finding a \$20 bill in your coat from last winter. Laughing at yourself. Midnight phone calls that last for hours. Running through sprinklers. Laughing for absolutely no reason at all. Having someone tell you that you're beautiful. Laughing at an inside joke. Friends. Falling in love for the first time.

Slumber parties. Accidentally overhearing someone say something nice about you. Waking up and realizing you still have a few hours left to sleep. Your first kiss. Being part of a team. Making new friends or spending time with old ones. Playing with a new puppy. Late night talks with your roommate that keep you from sleeping. Having someone play with your hair. Sweet dreams. Hot chocolate. Road trips with friends. Swinging on swings. Watching a good movie cuddled up on a couch with someone you love. Song lyrics printed inside your new CD so you can sing along without feeling stupid. Getting butterflies in your stomach every time you see that one person. Making eye contact with a cute stranger. Riding a bike downhill. The feeling you get the first time you step on stage. Knowing that even though sometimes things get hard, you aren't alone. Someone taking the time to care when you think no one does. Smiling at someone and knowing that you might have just made their day a little brighter!! Seeing that "special someone's" face light up when they walk into the room and see you. Watching a really beautiful sunset with friends. Feeling the sun on your face. Running in the rain. Looking at a photo album from when you were four years old. Overcoming your fears. Knowing what you have just done is right. Having someone listen to you and tell you that everything is going to be ok. Going sledding down a really steep hill!! Sharing a good cry with somebody you love. Seeing double rainbows. Having your sweetie crawl into bed with you first thing in the morning to wake you up. Getting a backrub. Getting in a tickle war with your best friend. GLITTER!! Holding hands with my husband. When I leave early in the morning while my wife is sleeping I kiss her good-bye. Those kisses are always met with a smile of love and affection even though I know she's still very much asleep. Sharing a bowl of hot popcorn on a cold night with the one you love. Seeing the world through the eyes of a child... When I feel very peaceful moments among family members. Hot biscuits and coffee in the morning. Rainbows and butterflies. Shopping sprees. Watching the sun rise over the ocean at daybreak with my very best friends...

WHAT SORT OF IMPRESSION DO YOU LEAVE?

A passenger in a railway train had in various ways been obnoxious to the fellow travellers in the compartment, and everyone was relieved when he prepared to leave the train. As he stepped on to the platform, one of the passengers called after him, "Hey, you've left something behind!" He turned back only to be met with the cynical information, "A bad impression." We leave either a bad or good impression with others. We should seek to live so that others can say of us, as Paul was able to say of the Philippian Christians in Philippians 1:3 "I thank my god always upon every remembrance of you."

WICKS AND FUSES

At times we may realize that our brother has something against us. We can rush to him and try to solve the problem before we get the facts, or be like the fellow who took the night job at the dynamite factory. He said, " Sometimes it is better to curse the darkness, than light the wrong candle." It is better to get the facts first. This will illuminate matters, so that we can tell the difference between wicks and fuses!!

WINDY NIGHTS

The owner of the sheep ranch is interviewing a number of individuals for the job of sheep herder, and is asking questions about their experience and qualifications for the job. The other applicants have many years of experience and letters of recommendation but when the owner interviews Jose and asks, "What are your qualifications?" Jose in his broken English, has only one reply, "I sleep well on a stormy night".

"What kind of a recommendation is that?" asks the owner. "My sheep may be in need of help at that time. Certainly no time to be sleeping." The owner, for some reason, decides to hire Jose in spite of what appears to be poor qualifications. Perhaps, he feels sorry for him, or perhaps he feels that he will work for less pay. Later, he finds out that Jose was by far the best applicant for the job and that what he meant by the expression "sleep well on a stormy night," was that he always took care to see that the sheep were well protected and fed in case a storm should come. He had already taken the necessary precautions so that if a storm would occur, he would not have to worry about rushing out into the storm to take care of them.

WEALTH IS ALL IN ONE'S POINT OF VIEW

One day a wealthy family man took his son on a trip to the country so he could have his son see how poor country people were.

They stayed one day and one night in the farm of a very humble farm house. At the end of the trip and back home the father asked the son: What did you think of the trip?

The son replied: "Very nice Dad"

Father: "Did you noticed how poor they were?"

Son: "Yes."

Father: "What did you learn?"

Son: "I learned that we have one dog in the house...and they have four. I learned that we have a fountain in the garden and they have a stream that has no end. I learned that we have imported lamps in the garden, they have the stars. I learned that our garden goes to the edge of our property, they have the entire horizon as their back yard. At the end of the son's reply the father was speechless and his son added: "Thank you dad for showing me how poor we really are."

WHICH ARE YOU?

Some Christians are like wheel barrows---Not good unless pushed.

Some are like canoes---They need to be paddled.

Some are like kites---If you don't keep a string on them, they'll fly away.

Some are like kittens---They are only content when petted.

Some are like footballs---You never know which way they will bounce next.

Some are like balloons---Full of air and ready to blow up.

Some are like trailers---They have to be pulled.

Some are like neon lights---Always going on and off.

Others are letting the holy spirit lead them---and we would like to add,

Some are like a good watch---Open face, pure gold, quietly busy and full of good works.

WORRY

Don't be like a jigsaw Christian . Every time they're faced with a problem they go to pieces

Chronic worriers often worry about not having something to worry about.

Ralph was head over heels in trouble, but doing little to help himself. A friend advised, Ralph, you've got two hands, why don't you do something I am, Ralph replied, I'm wringing both of them.

One man decided to put a marble in a vase for each worry during the year. At the end of the year he had quite a collection of marbles, but he couldn't remember what worry even one of them represented.

Every evening I turn all my worries over to God. He's going to be up all night anyway.

Why worry when you can trust. It is like a rocking chair, it give you something to do but doesn't get you anywhere.

Worry pulls tomorrow's cloud over today's sunshine.

Worry is wasting today's time to clutter up tomorrow's opportunities with yesterday's troubles.

Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow.

Jehovah is a help in trouble. In worry you are on your own.

When you worry, which do you worry about, what might happen or what might not happen? Whichever, turn it around, to relieve anxiety. That's common advice in Scotland. For worriers, the Scots have a proverb: What may be, may not be.

An average person's anxiety is focused on:

- 40% -- things that will never happen
- 30% -- things about the past that cant be changed
- 12% -- things about criticism by others, mostly untrue
- 10% -- about health, which gets worse with stress
- 8% -- about real problems that will be faced

Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength.

There are two days in the week on which I never worry; One is yesterday and the other is tomorrow.

Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.

YOU CHOOSE, WHO LOSES?

A small boy had two coins in his hands. One was for his use to purchase anything he wanted, while the other was to be placed in the contribution box. Well, as kids will do, he was sitting on the kerbside, playing with the coins, when one of them fell from his hands, rolled down the street, and fell in the sewer grate.

After a little reflection, he looked up, and said, "Well, Jehovah, there went yours."

Do we, when we are faced with demands on our time, tell Jehovah, "Well, there went yours"?

YOUR STRENGTH OR....

A little boy is working in the rock garden with his Dad. His father tells him that if he needs any help moving the rocks, he is right across the garden. Just call him. The little boy does fine for a while, but then the rocks get too big. But he wants to show his Dad how big he is, so he struggles and sweats and strains and pants and puffs and doesn't get very far. His Dad looks up and sees him continually struggling. "Son," his father says "You are not using all your strength." The little boy looks shocked but tries all the harder, with every ounce of strength he has he tries to get that rock in to his wagon. Puff, pant, strain, struggle, sweat, tears and hardly any progress. "Son, you are not using all your strength!" The boy says, "Yes I am Daddy. I am using everything I have." The Dad answers, "No son, you are not using me!"

We should not depend upon ourselves when we have problems but call on Jehovah to help us with our burdens.

ZEALOUS MINISTRY

There is a lost child, and a frantic mother calls the police. A hunt is organized and about 500 or 600 people turn up to search for this missing youngster. After a few hours the child is found by one or two of the search party. Does this mean that the other members of the search party wasted their time and effort because they were not the ones to find the child? No, everyone of them were needed to make the search effective and no one gave up the search feeling they were wasting their time.

Application: Even if we are not the ones to find honest hearted ones, we should never feel we are wasting our time, and give up on the search. Every one is needed to make the search effective.