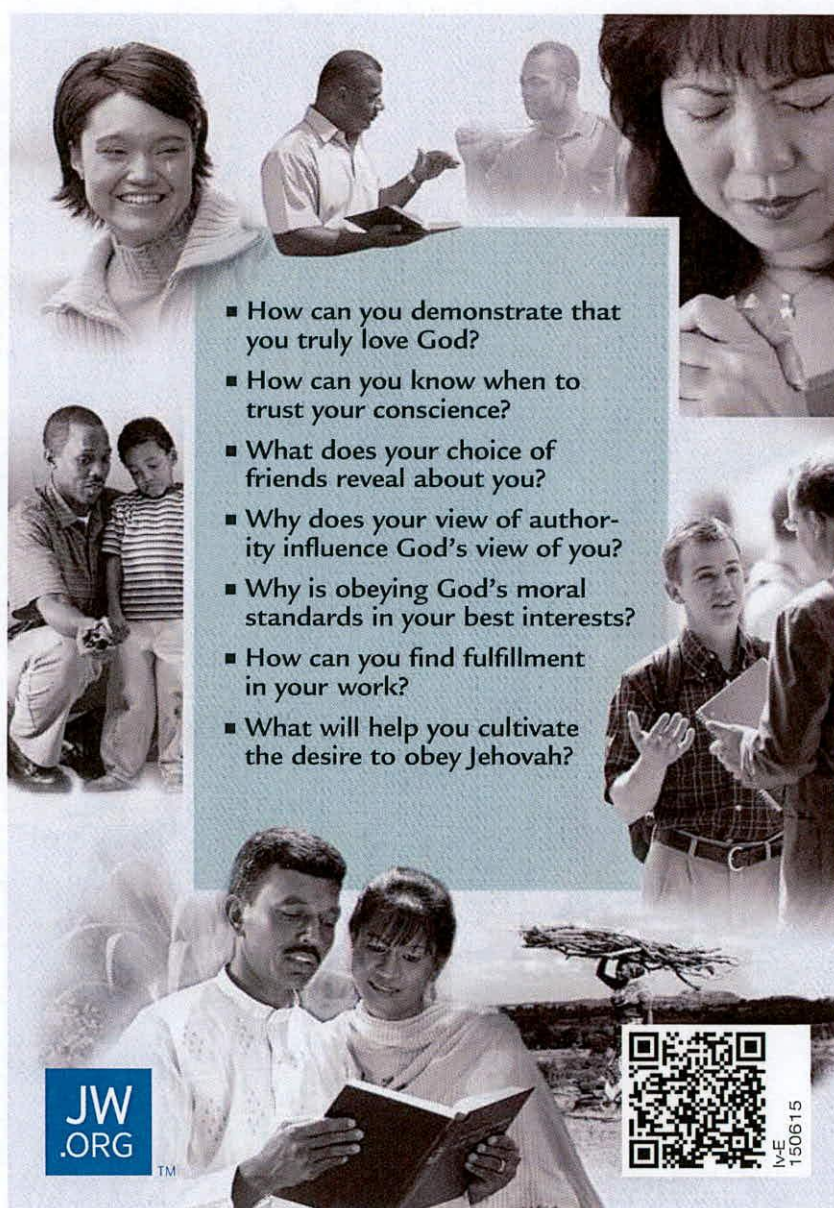



**“KEEP YOURSELVES IN  
GOD’S LOVE”**



- How can you demonstrate that you truly love God?
- How can you know when to trust your conscience?
- What does your choice of friends reveal about you?
- Why does your view of authority influence God's view of you?
- Why is obeying God's moral standards in your best interests?
- How can you find fulfillment in your work?
- What will help you cultivate the desire to obey Jehovah?

**JW**  
**.ORG** TM



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# “KEEP YOURSELVES IN GOD’S LOVE”

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## How to Treat a Disfellowshipped Person

Few things can hurt us more deeply than the pain we suffer when a relative or a close friend is expelled from the congregation for unrepentant sin. How we respond to the Bible's direction on this matter can reveal the depth of our love for God and of our loyalty to his arrangement.\* Consider some questions that arise on this subject.

*How should we treat a disfellowshipped person?* The Bible says: "Stop keeping company with anyone called a brother who is sexually immoral or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man." (1 Corinthians 5:11) Regarding everyone who "does not remain in the teaching of the Christ," we read: "Do not receive him into your homes or say a greeting to him. For the one who says a greeting to him is a sharer in his wicked works." (2 John 9-11) We do not have spiritual or social fellowship with disfellowshipped ones. *The Watchtower* of September 15, 1981, page 25, stated: "A simple 'Hello' to someone can be the first step that develops into a conversation and maybe even a friendship. Would we want to take that first step with a disfellowshipped person?"

*Is strict avoidance really necessary?* Yes, for several reasons. First, it is a matter of loyalty to God and his Word. We obey Jehovah not only when it is convenient but also when doing so presents real challenges. Love for God moves us to obey all his commandments, recognizing that he is just and loving and that his laws promote the greatest good. (Isaiah 48:17; 1 John 5:3) Second, withdrawing from an unrepentant wrongdoer protects us and the rest of the congregation from spiritual and moral contamination and upholds the congregation's good name. (1 Corinthians 5:6, 7) Third, our

\* Bible principles on this subject apply equally to those who disassociate themselves from the congregation.

firm stand for Bible principles may even benefit the disfellowshipped one. By supporting the decision of the judicial committee, we may touch the heart of a wrongdoer who thus far has failed to respond to the efforts of the elders to assist him. Losing precious fellowship with loved ones may help him to come "to his senses," see the seriousness of his wrong, and take steps to return to Jehovah.—Luke 15:17.

*What if a relative is disfellowshipped?* In such a case, the close bond between family members can pose a real test of loyalty. How should we treat a disfellowshipped relative? We cannot here cover every situation that may arise, but let us focus on two basic ones.

In some instances, the disfellowshipped family member may still be living in the same home as part of the immediate household. Since his being disfellowshipped does not sever the family ties, normal day-to-day family activities and dealings may continue. Yet, by his course, the individual has chosen to break the spiritual bond between him and his believing family. So loyal family members can no longer have spiritual fellowship with him. For example, if the disfellowshipped one is present, he would not participate when the family gets together for family worship. However, if the disfellowshipped one is a minor child, the parents are still responsible to instruct and discipline him. Hence, loving parents may arrange to conduct a Bible study with the child.\*—Proverbs 6:20-22; 29:17.

In other cases, the disfellowshipped relative may be living outside the immediate family circle and home. Although there might be a need for limited contact on some rare occasion to care for a necessary family matter, any such contact should be kept to a minimum. Loyal Christian family members do not look for excuses to have dealings with a

\* For more information about disfellowshipped minor children living in the home, see *The Watchtower* of October 1, 2001, pages 16-17, and November 15, 1988, page 20.



disfellowshipped relative not living at home. Rather, loyalty to Jehovah and his organization moves them to uphold the Scriptural arrangement of disfellowshipping. Their loyal course has the best interests of the wrongdoer at heart and may help him to benefit from the discipline received.\*—Hebrews 12:11.

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\* For more information about how to treat disfellowshipped relatives, see the Scriptural counsel discussed in *The Watchtower* of April 15, 1988, pages 26-31, and September 15, 1981, pages 26-31.

### **Head Coverings—When and Why?**

When and why should a Christian woman wear a head covering in connection with her worship? Let us consider the apostle Paul's inspired discussion of this subject. He provides the guidance we need in order to make good decisions, ones that honor God. (1 Corinthians 11:3-16) Paul reveals three factors to weigh: (1) the *activities* that call for a woman to wear such a covering, (2) the *settings* in which she should do so, and (3) the *motives* for her to apply this standard.

*The activities.* Paul mentions two: prayer and prophesying. (Verses 4, 5) Prayer, of course, is worshipful address to Jehovah. Today, prophesying would apply to any Bible-based teaching that a Christian minister does. Is Paul suggesting, though, that a woman should cover her head whenever she prays or teaches Bible truth? No. The setting in which a woman prays or teaches makes all the difference.

*The settings.* Paul's words suggest two settings, or spheres of activity—the family and the congregation. He says: "The head of a woman is the man; . . . every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered shames her head." (Verses 3, 5) In the family arrangement, the woman's husband is the one whom Jehovah designates as her head. Unless she gives due recognition to her husband's authority,