

“GOD’S LOVE”



**“KEEP YOURSELVES IN  
GOD’S LOVE”**

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?



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# “KEEP YOURSELVES IN GOD’S LOVE”

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***Dear Lover of Jehovah:***

*“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free,” said Jesus. (John 8:32) How encouraging those words are! Yes, it is possible to know the truth, even in these critical “last days” when falsehood abounds. (2 Timothy 3:1) Do you remember when you first recognized the truth as explained in God’s Word? What a thrilling experience that was!*

*However, as important as it is to have an accurate knowledge of the truth and to have a regular share in telling others about it, we must also conduct ourselves in harmony with the truth. To do that, we need to keep ourselves in God’s love. What does this involve? Jesus’ words on the night before his death answer this question. He told his faithful apostles: “If you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have observed the commandments of the Father and remain in his love.”—John 15:10.*

*Notice that Jesus remained in God’s love by observing his Father’s commandments. The same is true of us today. To remain in God’s love, we need to apply the truth in everyday life. That same evening, Jesus said: “If you know these things, happy you are if you do them.”—John 13:17.*

*It is our sincere hope that this publication will help you to continue to apply the truth in your life and thus keep yourself “in God’s love . . . with everlasting life in view.”—Jude 21.*

***Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses***





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## CHAPTER 5

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# How to Keep Separate From the World

**“You are no part of the world.”**

**—JOHN 15:19.**

DURING his final night on earth as a human, Jesus expressed deep concern for the future welfare of his followers. He even prayed about the matter, saying to his Father: “I do not request that you take them out of the world, but that you watch over them because of the wicked one. They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.” (John 17:15, 16) In this heartfelt request, Jesus showed both his deep love for his followers and the importance of his words stated earlier that night to some of them: “You are no part of the world.” (John 15:19) Clearly, it was of great importance to Jesus that his followers keep separate from the world!

<sup>2</sup> “The world” Jesus mentioned refers to all of mankind who are alienated from God, ruled by Satan, and enslaved to the selfish, prideful spirit that emanates from him. (John 14:30; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 5:19) Indeed, “friendship with [that] world is enmity with God.” (James 4:4) How, though, can all who want to remain in God’s love be in the world yet be separate from it? We will consider five ways: by remaining loyal to God’s Kingdom under Christ and neutral in worldly politics, by resisting the spirit of the world, by being modest in our

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1. What did Jesus emphasize during his final night on earth as a human?

2. What is “the world” to which Jesus referred?

dress and grooming, by keeping our life simple, and by putting on our spiritual suit of armor.

### **REMAINING LOYAL AND NEUTRAL**

<sup>3</sup> Instead of participating in the politics of his day, Jesus focused on preaching about God's Kingdom, the future heavenly government of which he was the prospective King. (Daniel 7:13, 14; Luke 4:43; 17:20, 21) Thus, when before Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, Jesus could say: "My Kingdom is no part of this world." (John 18:36) His faithful followers imitate his example by giving their loyalty to Christ and his Kingdom and by announcing that Kingdom to the world. (Matthew 24:14) "We are ambassadors substituting for Christ," wrote the apostle Paul. "As substitutes for Christ, we beg: 'Become reconciled to God.' "—2 Corinthians 5:20.

<sup>4</sup> Because ambassadors represent a foreign sovereign or state, they do not interfere in the internal affairs of the countries where they serve; they remain neutral. Ambassadors do, however, advocate the government of the country they represent. The same is true of Christ's anointed followers, whose "citizenship exists in the heavens." (Philippians 3:20) In fact, thanks to their zealous Kingdom preaching, they have helped millions of Christ's "other sheep" to "become reconciled to God."

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\* Since Pentecost 33 C.E., Christ has served as King over his congregation of anointed followers on earth. (Colossians 1:13) In 1914, Christ received royal authority over "the kingdom of the world." Hence, anointed Christians now also serve as ambassadors of the Messianic Kingdom.—Revelation 11:15.

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3. (a) How did Jesus view the politics of his day? (b) Why can it be said that Jesus' anointed followers serve as ambassadors? (Include footnote.)

4. How have all true Christians demonstrated loyalty to God's Kingdom? (See the box on page 52.)



## EARLY CHRISTIAN NEUTRALS

Secular history provides ample evidence that the early Christians remained politically neutral and refrained from warfare. Says the book *The Beginnings of Christianity*: "The founders of Christianity guarded with sedulous care against the development of anything like a disposition to interfere directly with the established political order." Similarly, the book *On the Road to Civilization* notes: "Early Christianity was little understood and was regarded with little favor by those who ruled the pagan world. . . . Christians refused to share certain duties of Roman citizens. . . . They would not hold political office."

Regarding the early Christians and military service, German theologian Peter Meinhold said: "Being a Christian and a soldier was considered irreconcilable." In his essay "An Inquiry Into the Accordancy of War With the Principles of Christianity," religion writer Jonathan Dymond wrote that for some time after the death of Jesus, His followers "refused to engage in [war]; whatever were the consequences, whether reproach, or imprisonment, or death." Dymond added: "These facts are indisputable." Only when "Christianity became corrupted," said another writer, did Christians become soldiers.

(John 10:16; Matthew 25:31-40) These latter ones serve as Christ's envoys, as it were, in support of Jesus' anointed brothers. As one united flock advocating the Messianic Kingdom, both groups maintain strict neutrality toward the world's political affairs.—**Read Isaiah 2:2-4.**

<sup>5</sup> Loyalty to Christ is not the only reason that true Christians are neutral. Unlike ancient Israel, which had a God-given land allocation, we are part of an international brotherhood. (Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 2:9) Thus, if we were to rally to the side of local political parties, both our freeness of speech in regard to the Kingdom message and our Christian unity would be severely compromised. (1 Corinthians 1:10) Furthermore, during war time, we would be fighting against fellow believers, whom we are commanded to love. (John 13:34, 35; 1 John 3:10-12) With good reason, then, Jesus told his disciples to lay down the sword. And he even told them to love their enemies.—Matthew 5:44; 26:52; see the box “Am I Remaining Neutral?” on page 55.

<sup>6</sup> As true Christians, we have dedicated our life to God, not to any human, human institution, or nation. Says 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20: “You do not belong to yourselves, for you were bought with a price.” Thus, while rendering “Caesar” his due in the form of honor, taxes, and relative subjection, Jesus’ followers give “God’s things to God.” (Mark 12:17; Romans 13:1-7) This includes their worship, their whole-souled love, and their loyal obedience. If necessary, they are ready to give up their life for God.—Luke 4:8; 10:27; read Acts 5:29; Romans 14:8.

### **RESISTING “THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD”**

<sup>7</sup> Another way that Christians keep separate from the world is by resisting its evil spirit. “We received, not the

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5. How is the Christian congregation different from ancient Israel, and how does this difference manifest itself?

6. How does your dedication to God affect your relationship with Caesar?

7, 8. What is “the spirit of the world,” and how is that spirit “at work” in disobedient humans?



spirit of the world, but the spirit that is from God,” wrote Paul. (1 Corinthians 2:12) To the Ephesians, he said: “You at one time walked according to . . . this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.”—Ephesians 2:2, 3.

<sup>8</sup> The world’s “air,” or spirit, is an invisible, impelling force that incites disobedience to God and fosters “the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes.” (1 John 2:16; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) “The authority” of this spirit lies in its appeal to the sinful flesh, its subtlety, its relentlessness and, like air, its pervasiveness. Moreover, it is “at work” in disobedient humans by gradually nurturing in them ungodly traits, such as selfishness, haughtiness, greedy ambition, and the spirit of moral independence and rebellion.\* Simply put, the spirit of the world progressively causes the traits of the Devil to grow in the hearts of humans.—John 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:8, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Can the spirit of the world take root in your mind and heart? Yes, but only if you let it do so by lowering your guard. (**Read Proverbs 4:23.**) Its influence often begins subtly, perhaps by way of associates who may appear to be good people but, in fact, have no love for Jehovah. (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33) You can also absorb that evil spirit through objectionable literature, pornographic or apostate Internet sites, unwholesome entertainment, and highly competitive sports—really, through anyone or anything that conveys the thinking of Satan or his system.

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\* See *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, pages 389-393, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

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9. In what ways can the world’s spirit enter our mind and heart?

<sup>10</sup> How can we resist the insidious spirit of the world and keep ourselves in God's love? Only by taking full advantage of Jehovah's spiritual provisions and by praying constantly for holy spirit. Jehovah is far greater than the Devil or the wicked world under satanic control. (1 John 4:4) How important, then, that we stay close to Jehovah in prayer!

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

### AM I REMAINING NEUTRAL?

**Principle:** "My Kingdom is no part of this world."—John 18:36.

#### Some questions to ask yourself

- How would I explain why saluting the flag is a form of idol worship?—Exodus 20:4, 5; 1 John 5:21.
- When explaining my nonparticipation in certain national ceremonies, how would I show my deep respect for those who do not share my beliefs?—1 Peter 3:15.
- What are my reasons for not supporting any political parties or performing any type of military service?—John 13:34; 1 John 3:10-12.

\* See the Appendix, pages 212-215.





## **BEING MODEST IN OUR DRESS AND GROOMING**

<sup>11</sup> An outward indication of the spirit that impels a person is his dress, grooming, and hygiene. In many lands, standards of dress have fallen so low that one television commentator suggested that soon there will be nothing left for prostitutes to wear. Even girls not yet in their teens have been caught up in this trend—"long on skin, short on modesty," said one newspaper report. Another trend is to dress in a slovenly manner that reflects a spirit of rebellion as well as a lack of dignity and self-respect.

<sup>12</sup> As servants of Jehovah, we rightly want to look our best, which means dressing in a way that is neat, clean, in good taste, and appropriate for the occasion. At all times, our appearance ought to reflect "modesty and soundness of mind," which along with "good works" is fitting for anyone—male or female—"professing devotion to God." Of course, our main concern is, not to draw attention to ourselves, but to "keep [ourselves] in God's love." (1 Timothy 2:9, 10; Jude 21) Yes, we want our most beautiful adornment to be "the secret person of the heart . . . , which is of great value in the eyes of God."—1 Peter 3:3, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Keep in mind, too, that our clothing styles and grooming can influence how others view true worship. The Greek word rendered "modesty," when used in a moral sense, expresses the thought of reverence, awe, and respect for the feelings or opinion of others. Our goal, therefore, should be to subordinate our presumed rights to the consciences of others. Above all, we want to bring honor to Jehovah and his people

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11. How has the world's spirit influenced standards of dress?

12, 13. What principles should govern our dress and grooming?

and to recommend ourselves as God's ministers, doing "all things for God's glory."—1 Corinthians 4:9; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 6:3, 4; 7:1.

<sup>14</sup> Our dress, grooming, and cleanliness are even more important when we are engaging in the field ministry or attending a Christian meeting. Ask yourself: 'Do my appearance and personal hygiene draw undue attention to me? Do they embarrass others? Do I consider my rights in these areas to be more important than qualifying for service privileges in the congregation?'—Psalm 68:6; Philippians 4:5; 1 Peter 5:6.

<sup>15</sup> The Bible does not set out for Christians a list of rules on dress, grooming, and hygiene. Jehovah has no desire to deny us our freedom of choice or the use of our thinking faculties. Rather, he wants us to become mature people who reason on Bible principles and who "through use have their powers of discernment trained to distinguish both right and wrong." (Hebrews 5:14) Above all, he wants us to be governed by love—love for God and neighbor. (**Read Mark 12:30, 31.**) Within



*Does my appearance bring honor to Jehovah?*

14. In regard to our appearance and hygiene, what questions should we ask ourselves?

15. Why does God's Word not set out a list of rules on dress, grooming, and hygiene?





those boundaries, there is the potential for great variety in dress and grooming. Evidence of this can be seen in the colorfully dressed, joyful throngs of Jehovah's people no matter where on earth they are gathered.

### **KEEPING OUR LIFE SIMPLE**

<sup>16</sup> The spirit of the world is deceptive and impels millions to look to money and material things for happiness. However, Jesus said: "Even when a person has an abundance, his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) While not endorsing asceticism, or extreme self-denial, Jesus taught that life and genuine happiness come to those who are "conscious of their spiritual need" and those who maintain a simple life,

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16. How does the spirit of the world run contrary to Jesus' teaching, and what questions should we ask ourselves?

one that is focused on spiritual things. (Matthew 5:3; 6:22, footnote) Ask yourself: 'Do I truly believe what Jesus taught, or am I being influenced by "the father of the lie"? (John 8:44) What do my words, my goals, my priorities, and my way of life reveal?'—Luke 6:45; 21:34-36; 2 John 6.

<sup>17</sup> "Wisdom is proved righteous by its works," said Jesus. (Matthew 11:19) Consider just some of the benefits enjoyed by those who maintain a simple life. They find true refreshment in Kingdom service. (Matthew 11:29, 30) They avoid undue anxieties and thus spare themselves much mental and emotional pain. (**Read 1 Timothy 6:9, 10.**) Content with having life's necessities, they have more time for their family and Christian companions. They may sleep better as a result. (Ecclesiastes 5:12) They experience the greater joy of giving, doing so in whatever way they can. (Acts 20:35) And they "abound in hope" and have inner peace and contentment. (Romans 15:13; Matthew 6:31, 32) These blessings are truly priceless!

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

<sup>18</sup> Those who keep themselves in God's love also enjoy spiritual protection from Satan, who wants to deprive Christians, not just of happiness, but of everlasting life. (1 Peter 5:8) "We have a struggle," said Paul, "not against blood and flesh, but against the governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) The word "struggle" suggests that our

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17. Name some benefits enjoyed by those who maintain a simple life.

18. How does the Bible describe our enemy, his methods, and the nature of our "struggle"?



fight is not long-distance—from the safety of a hidden bunker, so to speak—but hand-to-hand. Furthermore, the terms “governments,” “authorities,” and “world rulers” indicate that attacks from the spirit realm are highly organized and deliberate.

<sup>19</sup> Despite human frailties and limitations, however, we can gain the victory. How? By taking up “the complete suit of armor from God.” (Ephesians 6:13) Describing that armor, Ephesians 6:14-18 reads: “Stand firm, therefore, with the belt of truth fastened around your waist, wearing the breastplate of righteousness, and having your feet shod in readiness to declare the good news of peace. Besides all of this, take up the large shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the wicked one’s burning arrows. Also, accept the helmet [or, hope] of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, that is, God’s word, while with every form of prayer and supplication you carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit.”

<sup>20</sup> Since it is a provision of God, that spiritual suit of armor will not fail us, provided that we wear it at all times. Unlike literal soldiers, who may have long breaks from fighting, Christians are in a relentless life-and-death struggle that will not stop until God has destroyed Satan’s world and abyssed all wicked spirits. (Revelation 12:17; 20:1-3) So do not give up if you are struggling with weaknesses or wrong desires, for we all have to “pummel” ourselves in order to stay faithful to Jehovah. (1 Corinthians 9:27) Indeed, it is when we are *not* struggling that we should be concerned!

<sup>21</sup> Moreover, we cannot win this fight in our own

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19. Describe the Christian’s spiritual suit of armor.

20. How does our situation differ from that of a literal soldier?

21. How only can we come off victorious in our spiritual warfare?

strength. Hence, Paul reminds us of the need to pray to Jehovah “on every occasion in spirit.” At the same time, we should listen to Jehovah by studying his Word and associating with fellow “soldiers” at every opportunity, for we are not in this fight alone! (Philemon 2; Hebrews 10: 24, 25) Those who are faithful in all these areas will not only come off victorious but will also be able to make a strong defense for their faith when it is challenged.

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

<sup>22</sup> “Because you are no part of the world,” said Jesus, “the world hates you.” (John 15:19) Christians, therefore, must always be ready to defend their faith and to do so in a respectful, mild manner. **(Read 1 Peter 3:15.)** Ask yourself: ‘Do I understand why Jehovah’s Witnesses sometimes take a stand that is contrary to popular opinion? When facing the challenge of taking such a stand, am I thoroughly convinced that what the Bible and the faithful slave say is right? (Matthew 24:45; John 17:17) And when it comes to doing what is right in Jehovah’s eyes, am I not only prepared to be different but also proud to be different?’—Psalm 34:2; Matthew 10:32, 33.

<sup>23</sup> Often, though, our desire to keep separate from the world is put to the test in more subtle ways. For example, as mentioned earlier, the Devil tries to lure Jehovah’s servants into the world by means of worldly entertainment. How can we choose wholesome entertainment that will leave us refreshed and with a clean conscience? That subject will be considered in the next chapter.

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22, 23. (a) Why must we be ready at all times to defend our faith, and what questions should we ask ourselves? (b) What subject will be considered in the next chapter?