

through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it." (Matthew 7:13, 14) How clearly those words answer our questions! They show that many people are not worshiping God in a way that pleases him. Only a few are on the road leading to life.

³ Probably you find yourself readily agreeing with the fact that much religion is not approved by God. No doubt there are many things done in the name of religion that you do not approve. For example, if you look around in the churches and observe persons who live immoral lives but who make a pretense at being righteous, you know that something is wrong. (2 Timothy 3:4, 5) And when you read in the newspaper that some clergymen are publicly approving of sex relations between unmarried persons and that they are saying that homosexuality is all right under certain conditions, you are well aware that this is not what God says. You may remember that God destroyed the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And why? Because they practiced such things! So you know that God is not going to approve of a religion that tells people it is all right to act like that. —Jude 7.

⁴ However, you have no doubt heard people say: "It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you lead a clean moral life and deal kindly with your neighbors." But is that all there is to worshiping God in an acceptable way? These things are necessary, but God requires more. Doctrines are

3. Are there things done in the name of religion of which you do not approve?

4. (a) Besides our being moral and kind, what else must we consider about our religion, in view of Jesus' words at John 4:23? (b) Why do we need to examine the doctrines that we have been taught?

also involved. The Bible informs us that "the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth." (John 4:23) If our worship is to be acceptable to God, it must be firmly rooted in God's Word of truth. Jesus reproved those persons who claimed to serve God but who relied heavily on the traditions of men in preference to God's Word. He applied to them God's own words from Isaiah 29:13, saying: "It is in vain that they keep worshiping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines." (Matthew 15:9) Since we do not want our worship to be in vain, it is important for each one of us to examine his religion.

⁵ We need to examine, not only what we personally believe, but also what is taught by any religious organization with which we may be associated. Are its teachings in full harmony with God's Word, or are they based on the traditions of men? If we are lovers of the truth, there is nothing to fear from such an examination. It should be the sincere desire of every one of us to learn what God's will is for us, and then to do it.—John 8:32.

⁶ The mere fact that church members may have the Bible or that it is occasionally read to them from the pulpit does not of itself prove that all the things they are taught are in the Bible. It is good to have the Bible; each and every person should. But we must also know what it says and believe it. If a religion really accepts the Bible as God's Word, it is not going to use certain parts of it and reject other parts. "All Scripture is inspired of

5. Why should we examine, not only our personal beliefs, but also the teachings of any religious organization with which we may be associated?

6. (a) Does the fact that the Bible is occasionally used in a church prove that all the church doctrines are from the Bible? (b) Why must religion approved by God agree in all details with the Bible?

to seek out Jehovah's "sayings," "commandments," "wisdom," "discernment," and "understanding." Searching for treasures requires effort and perseverance. It calls for much digging. It is not different when searching for "the very knowledge of God," for "discernment," and for "understanding." This also requires much digging, or penetrating below the surface. Do not feel that it is sufficient to skim over the surface of God's Word.

¹⁷ A psalmist exclaimed: "How great your works are, O Jehovah! Very deep your thoughts are." (Psalm 92:5) The apostle Paul wrote admiringly: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge!" (Romans 11:33) In another letter, he spoke of "the deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10) True, as Paul explains, God reveals such deep things "through his spirit," which active force acts powerfully upon the anointed Christians appointed by Christ Jesus to provide spiritual food. We should be truly thankful for the spiritual digging that the "slave" class does to make clearer and clearer for us "the hidden depths of God's purposes."—1 Corinthians 2:10, *Today's English Version*.

¹⁸ But that does not relieve each individual Christian of the responsibility to dig deeper into God's Word, for the purpose of getting the full depth of the thoughts explained. This involves looking up the scriptures cited. It means reading the footnotes in *Watchtower* articles, some of which refer the reader to an older publication that provides a fuller explanation of a certain passage or prophecy. It requires digging deeper, putting forth effort to lo-

17. What do the Scriptures say about Jehovah's thoughts, and so for what should we be thankful?

18. How can each Christian dig deeper into God's Word, and what special digging tools have been provided?

By Way of a Reminder

- Why do some remain spiritual "babes"?
- What can help a person to become mature?
- How can we develop good spiritual "eating" habits?
- What can make our personal study more pleasurable?
- Why is it necessary to dig deep into God's Word?

cate that older publication and then studying the pages referred to. It consists of making full use of specialized Bible study aids that the "slave" class has made available over the years, such as indexes, concordances, *Aid to Bible Understanding*, and *All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*. Yes, Christians have been provided with excellent digging tools, the latest of which is the new English-language Reference Bible, which, in time, will be available in a number of other languages. Let us use these digging tools to good advantage.

Study With a Purpose

¹⁹ The purpose of our digging deeper into God's Word is not to make us feel superior to our brothers or to make a show of our knowledge. This is often the case with worldly people. In principle, what Paul wrote is true here: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." (1 Corinthians 8:1) Love will move us humbly to use our knowledge in the preaching and disciplining work and in contributing discreetly to the spiritual value of Christian meetings.

19. What word of caution is vital about knowledge?