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your standards, being influenced to think and act without regard for Bible principles. When you stand up for what is right and conduct yourself as a Christian, fellow students will often be cutting and at times vicious in voicing their disapproval. They may call you a "square," a "religious bug," and many other even more unkind things. Because you will not let the barrier down, you are not invited to various functions in school and in the neighborhood and are more or less left alone. Be thankful for this, for it is actually a protection for you. Wisely continue to stick to what is right. Keep in mind Exodus 23:2, which says, "You must not follow after the crowd for evil ends." You know the evil that is being practiced. Do not let it or those who practice it influence your decisions. Do you want to be a minister of God's Word? Then take the right course!

<sup>12</sup> The influence and spirit of this world is to get ahead, to make a name for oneself. Many schools now have student counselors who encourage one to pursue higher education after high school, to pursue a career with a future in this system of things. Do not be influenced by them. Do not let them "brainwash" you with the Devil's propaganda to get ahead, to make something of yourself in this world. This world has very little time left! Any "future" this world offers is no future! Wisely, then, let God's Word influence you in selecting a course that will result in your protection and blessing. Make pioneer service, the full-time ministry, with the possibility of Bethel or missionary service your goal. This is a life that offers an everlasting future!

12. How does the world view higher education, and how should we reason on this?

DECISIONS CHRISTIANS FACE

<sup>13</sup> Now that we have discussed the influences that we must guard against in making decisions, let us turn our attention to some of the decisions we must make and to those things that will influence our decisions for good. It is vital that we build a pattern of making right decisions in our everyday life. Some of the decisions we face each day may seem small and unimportant, having little to do with our receiving everlasting life. But does not God's Word counsel, "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much"? (Luke 16:10) If we can be influenced to disregard Bible principles in making small, everyday decisions, then what assurance do we have that, when we are faced with the necessity of making a decision affecting our everlasting welfare, we will suddenly reverse the trend and decide in harmony with Bible principles?

<sup>14</sup> Then there are vital decisions that may arise very unexpectedly. Suppose we were involved in an accident and were faced with the decision of whether to submit to blood transfusion either for ourself or for one of our family. Are we convinced in our heart that we could undergo and withstand the pressure from doctors and unbelieving friends and relatives? Are we prepared to take a firm, unshakable stand because of our knowing what God's Word says, although death may face us? Many of our Christian brothers and sisters have already been faced with this sobering decision.

<sup>15</sup> There is also the matter of neutrality. More and more the emotional tide of nationalism is increasing its demands toward

- 13. Why should we never be careless in making small decisions?
- 14. (a) What issue could arise that would demand an on-the-spot decision? (b) What should we consider now?
- 15. The influence of nationalism poses what question to us all, and how real is this issue?

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was a fantastic 17-percent increase in crime over 1967. This came on top of many years of other large increases. The population, however, grew only one percent last year. So crime exploded seventeen times as fast as the population!

If you are a young person, you also need to face the fact that you will never grow old in this present system of things. Why not? Because all the evidence in fulfillment of Bible prophecy indicates that this corrupt system is due to end in a few years. Of the generation that observed the beginning of the "last days" in 1914, Jesus foretold: "This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur."—Matt. 24:34.

Therefore, as a young person, you will never fulfill any career that this system offers. If you are in high school and thinking about a college education, it means at least four, perhaps even six or eight more years to graduate into a specialized career. But where will this system of things be by that time? It will be well on the way toward its finish, if not actually gone!

This is why parents who base their lives on God's prophetic Word find it much more practical to direct their young ones into trades that do not require such long

periods of additional schooling. And trades such as carpentry, plumbing, and others, will be useful not only now, but perhaps even more so in the reconstruction work that will take place in God's new order.

With such practical trades, many young persons have been able to sustain themselves with part-time work. This allows them to spend much more of their time helping interested persons to learn God's requirements for life by studying the Bible with them.

True, those who do not understand where we are in the stream of time from God's viewpoint will call this impractical. But which is really practical: preparing yourself for a position in this world that soon will pass away? or working toward surviving this system's end and enjoying eternal life in God's righteous new order? —1 John 2:17.

In these urgent times, as this wicked system writhes in its death pangs, this counsel from God's Word is most practical for all who want to keep living: "My son, my law do not forget, and my commandments may your heart observe, because length of days and years of life and peace will be added to you."—Prov. 3:1, 2.

### *"Fine Works Are Publicly Manifest"*

◆ The apostle Paul wrote that "fine works are publicly manifest." (1 Tim. 5:25) A witness of Jehovah in California experienced the truthfulness of these words when she began studying the Bible with a woman. At first the woman kept her agreed-upon appointments regularly. Later, the woman began missing some of her studies and at times would not be home when the Witness called. However, the Witness patiently and faithfully persevered, finding her home one time and not home many other times. This went on for months. One month the Witness did not find her home once! On her last call the Witness began to write the woman a little note to leave in her door. A neighbor called to the Witness and the Witness went to see her. The neighbor said to the Witness: "I have watched you call week after week at that house and I have noticed that she is rarely there when you come. I want you to start calling on me. I would like to study the Bible!"

## HOW ARE YOU USING YOUR LIFE?

**I**S IT not apparent that most of mankind are living their lives for themselves? They are using their lives as *they* see fit, without concern for others. But what about us? The apostle Paul wrote to fellow servants of Jehovah, saying: "None of us, in fact, lives with regard to himself only, and no one dies with regard to himself only; for both if we live, we live to Jehovah, and if we die, we die to Jehovah. Therefore both if we live and if we die, we belong to Jehovah."—Rom. 14:7, 8.

This is something for all of us to give serious thought to: It would be entirely inappropriate for us, while professing to be Jehovah's people, to try to live our lives with regard to ourselves only. As the apostle Paul wrote: "You do not belong to yourselves, for you were bought with a price. By all means, glorify God."—1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

Are we not thankful that Jehovah God has purchased us and that we now belong to Him? He has bought us with the life of his own dear Son so that eternal death does not have to be our lot, but we have before us the opportunity to enjoy everlasting life. (John 3:16, 36) How are you affected by this loving provision of God? Does it not cause you to want to show Jehovah your deep appreciation? The apostle Peter noted that if we have the proper mental disposition we will be moved to "live the remainder of [our] time in the flesh, no more for the desires of men, but for God's will."—1 Pet. 4:2.

Is that what you are doing? Are you living no longer simply to satisfy personal ambitions or desires, but to do God's will? Are there ways in which you could share more fully in doing the will of God?

### *God's Will for Us*

Jehovah makes clear in his Word that his will for us today includes accomplishing a great work of Kingdom-preaching before the end of this system comes. (Matt. 24:14) Jesus Christ did a similar work. He said: "Also to other cities I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth."—Luke 4:43.

Jesus did not hold back, but was whole-souled in his service to God. When we read the historical accounts of his ministry in the Gospels, how impressed we are with his energy and zeal in doing the Kingdom-preaching! Jesus knew that he had only a short time, and he did not spare himself in finishing his assignment. Should we not today be imitating his example, especially since we have such a short time left now in which to complete the Kingdom-preaching?

Yes, the end of this system is so very near! Is that not reason to increase our activity?

In this regard we can learn something from a runner who puts on a final burst of speed near the finish of a race. Look at Jesus, who apparently stepped up his activity during his final days on earth. In fact, over 27 percent of the material in the Gospels is devoted to just the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry!—Matt. 21:1-27:50; Mark 11:1-15:37; Luke 19:29-23:46; John 11:55-19:30.

By carefully and prayerfully examining our own circumstances, we also may find that we can spend more time and energy in preaching during this final period before the present system ends. Many of our brothers and sisters are doing just that. This is evident from the rapidly increasing number of pioneers.

Yes, since the summer of 1973 there have been new peaks in pioneers every month. Now there are 20,394 regular and special pioneers in the United States, an all-time peak. That is 5,190 more than there were in February 1973! A 34-percent increase! Does that not warm our hearts? Reports are heard of brothers selling their homes and property and planning to finish out the rest of their days in this old system in the pioneer service. Certainly this is a fine way to spend the short time remaining before the wicked world's end.—1 John 2:17.

Circumstances such as poor health or responsibilities in connection with your family may limit what you can do in the field ministry. And yet, the pioneer ranks include many who have health limitations, as well as some persons with families. But these broth-