



**FOUNTAIN OF HOSANNA CHURCH OF CHRIST**

10, Ajenifuja Street, off College Road, Haruna Bus Stop,  
Ifako-Ijaiye, Lagos State, Nigeria.

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**SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDY MANUAL**

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**SUNDAY SCHOOL  
BIBLE STUDY MANUAL**

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## CONTENTS

*From the General Overseer*

*Dedication*

*Core Passion*

*Acknowledgements*

*Preface*

*How to Use the Manual*

***Worship, Thanksgiving and Praises*** **07/01/2024**

***Prayers and General Introduction*** **14/01/2024**

Lesson 01 'And the Light shineth in darkness' 21/01/2024

Lesson 02 Overcoming Evil Champions in the New Year – Part 1 28/01/2024

Lesson 03 Overcoming Evil Champions in the New Year – Part 2 04/02/2024

Lesson 04 From Potential to Prosperity 11/02/2024

***Review of Lessons 01-04*** **18/02/2024**

***Questions and Answers | Prayers on Lessons 01-04*** **25/02/2024**

Lesson 05 Thanksgiving in Good and Bad Times 03/03/2024

Lesson 06 Women: Working and Winning – Part 1 10/03/2024

Lesson 07 Women: Working and Winning – Part 2 17/03/2024

Lesson 08 The Lord's Prayer 24/03/2024

Lesson 09 Invitation to Light 31/03/2024

***Review of Lessons 05-09*** **07/04/2024**

***Bible Drill on Lessons 01-09*** **14/04/2024**

Lesson 10 The Dynamics of Power – Part 1 21/04/2024

Lesson 11 The Dynamics of Power – Part 2 28/04/2024

Lesson 12 Character Study of Deborah: Mother in Israel 05/05/2024

Lesson 13 The Danger of Marital Divorce – Part 1 12/05/2024

Lesson 14 The Danger of Marital Divorce – Part 2 19/05/2024

Lesson 15 Biblical Pattern of Training Children 26/05/2024

***Review of Lessons 10-15*** **02/06/2024**

<b>Questions and Answers   Prayers on Lessons 10-15</b>		<b>09/06/2024</b>
Lesson 16	Men: Pillars of the Gate	16/06/2024
Lesson 17	Pure, Practical Religion	23/06/2024
Lesson 18	Book Study (Jonah)	30/06/2024
<b>Review of Lessons 16-18</b>		<b>07/07/2024</b>
Lesson 19	Freedom from Financial Bondage	14/07/2024
Lesson 20	Living in the Spirit	21/07/2024
Lesson 21	In His Presence – Part 1	28/07/2024
Lesson 22	In His Presence – Part 2	04/08/2024
Lesson 23	All about Christian Giving	11/08/2024
<b>Review of Lessons 19-23</b>		<b>18/08/2024</b>
<b>Questions and Answers   Prayers on Lessons 19-23</b>		<b>25/08/2024</b>
<b>Bible Drill on Lessons 10-23</b>		<b>01/09/2024</b>
Lesson 24	Psalm 23 – Part 1	08/09/2024
Lesson 25	Psalm 23 – Part 2	15/09/2024
Lesson 26	The Tongue of the Wise – Part 1	22/09/2024
Lesson 27	The Tongue of the Wise – Part 2	29/09/2024
Lesson 28	The Tongue of the Wise – Part 3	06/10/2024
<b>Review of Lessons 24-28</b>		<b>13/10/2024</b>
<b>Questions and Answers   Prayers on Lessons 24-28</b>		<b>20/10/2024</b>
Lesson 29	Signs of the Last Days	27/10/2024
Lesson 30	Wait on the Lord – Part 1	03/11/2024
Lesson 31	Wait on the Lord – Part 2	10/11/2024
Lesson 32	Faithfulness in Stewardship – Part 1	17/11/2024
Lesson 33	Faithfulness in Stewardship – Part 2	24/11/2024
<b>Year End Test on Lessons 01-33 (Headquarter and Parishes)</b>		<b>01/12/2024</b>
<b>Review of 2024 Lessons (January – April)</b>		<b>08/12/2024</b>
<b>Review of 2024 Lessons (May – August)</b>		<b>15/12/2024</b>
<b>Review of 2024 Lessons (September – November)</b>		<b>22/12/2024</b>
<b>The Sunday School – End of Year Activity Review</b>		<b>29/12/2024</b>

## **FROM THE GENERAL OVERSEER**

Greetings to you, my beloved brethren and Happy New Year. Glory to God alone for His past, present and future mercies. **The Lord is good!**

I thank you for keeping faith in the Word of God through your regular attendance and active participation in the Sunday School Bible Study Classes.

As you hold your confidence steadfast, you will find this edition of the Sunday School Bible Study Manual more inspiring.

God has spoken that, **'as light, we will shine in a world of darkness'** (John 1:5). Let us therefore enter into this covenant by ensuring that we do not miss any of the 33 Lessons contained in this manual as they offer sound biblical teaching, deeper revelation and spiritual energy to keep you all through the Year.

Also, it will be an expression of love to be a channel of light to friends, families and even foes by **gifting** a copy of this Manual to each of them.

Once again, I welcome you to 2024.

**-Prophet Kehinde Abiodun**

*General Overseer.*

## **DEDICATION**

A special dedication to everyone willing to respond to invitation to Light (Jesus) and thus shine in darkness.

## **CORE PASSION**

### ***OUR VISION***

To reach out to all men with the unadulterated Word of God to **impact, influence** and **inspire** lives.

### ***OUR MISSION***

Make every Sunday School Student sound in the doctrines and teachings of the Word of God with a good example to all men.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- **WRITERS**

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- **COVER DESIGN**

FHCC MEDIA

## PREFACE

**Al-le-lu ia!!!!!!**

We appreciate the Author of the Scriptures for the grace and unwavering commitment to produce the Sunday School Bible Study Manual for 2024 in spite of daunting challenges. To Him is all praise.

This Manual is unique in that **‘the entrance of God’s words giveth light’ (Psalm 119:30)**. Wherever God’s Word enters, light enters that place too and darkness vanishes.

As you therefore diligently study the various topics, you will be blessed, **truly shine as light and live a darkness-free life** in the name of Jesus. Amen.

*Maranatha!*

**-Brother Femi Adegoke**

For and on behalf of *Sunday School* Unit.

## HOW TO USE THE MANUAL

### The Teacher should...

- Attend the preview class of the lesson in view.
- Teach the lesson to achieve the lesson objectives.
- Encourage the Students to mark their Bibles; this helps in personal Bible study.
- Make the class interactive by entertaining questions from students.
- Engage everyone in any group discussion and check any divergent focus and questions in the class.

### The Student should...

- Study the next lesson ahead of time.
- Attend the class with more than one version of the Bible.
- Participate in any group discussion and ask relevant questions.

### HOW GREAT THOU ART

1. O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the works Thy hands hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy pow'r thro' out the universe displayed,

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee;*

*How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee;*

*How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

2. When through the woods and forest glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze;

3. And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin;

4. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation,  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,  
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

### ANOTHER YEAR IS DAWNING

1. Another year is dawning!  
Dear Father, let it be,  
In working or in waiting,

Another year with Thee;  
Another year of progress,  
Another year of praise,  
Another year of proving,  
Thy presence all the days.

2. Another year of mercies,  
Of faithfulness and grace;  
Another year of gladness  
The glory of thy face;  
Another year of leaning  
Upon thy loving breast;  
Another year of trusting,  
Of quiet, happy rest;

3. Another year of service,  
Of witness for Thy love;  
Another year of training  
For holier work above.  
Another year is dawning!  
Dear Father, let it be,  
On earth, or else in heaven,  
Another year for Thee.



**'AND THE LIGHT SHINETH IN DARKNESS'****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To reveal various ways by which Jesus proved Himself as Light.
2. To give us examples of what must be seen as darkness in our world.
3. To know that darkness should not be considered around us as we are meant to be light in our space.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – John 1:5**

*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Matthew 5:14-16, John 1:1-9****❑ INTRODUCTION**

It's a known truth that the world is in total darkness (Isaiah 60: 2). Hence it becomes necessary for us to showcase light to the world as children of light (Ephesians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:5). God expects that we become light through which the world sees amidst the gross darkness.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Jesus is the Light
2. We are in a world of darkness
3. What should characterize believers' shining as light in darkness?

**1. Jesus is the Light**

The presence of light represents life (John 1:4). Jesus is the only Light that transcends all lights. John 1:9-10. Light reveals God to man and exposes sin of man to God (Psalm 36:9b).

Jesus revealed Himself as extraordinary Light to man in several ways, including:

- Through opening our eyes of understanding. Ephesians 1:18.
- His humility. Philippians 2:5-8.
- Assurance of forgiveness of our sins and our need for genuine repentance. Ephesians 1:7, Mark 2:17.
- Through redemption (being bought back). Colossians 1:13, Hebrews 9:12, 15.
- Through His death that we might live. Romans 6:23b.
- Through overcoming principalities and powers of darkness. Colossians 2:15.
- Through equipping us to win the battle of life. Ephesians 6:10-18.

-Through healing and paying for our deliverance at Calvary. Luke 4:18-19, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Colossians 1:13.

- Through good works. Acts 10:38.

- Through true prosperity. 3 John 2.

If therefore you are a child of God having given your life to Jesus Christ, you are also qualified to be called light because **'Light begets light'**.

## **2. We are in a world of darkness**

Darkness is the absence of light (Genesis 1:2). It speaks of sin. The world has rejected Light, hence it is a situation of uncertainty and bondage. Men indeed love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19).

The world cannot continue to reject Light and expect progress. Whoever or whatever rejects Christ is in darkness. 1 John 2:15.

As children of God, while we are in the world, we are not of the darkness of the world. John 17:16, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

Examples of darkness in our world that every Christian should have no communion with include:

-Desire for pleasure against God's will. Romans 1:32, 1Timothy 5:6.

-The god of this world. 2 Corinthians 4:4.

-Lust and sensual cravings of the flesh. 1 John 2:16.

-Embracing the systems that negate Christ. 2 Timothy 3:1-4.

-Obedience to the dictates of the flesh. Galatians 5:19-21.

-Principalities and wicked powers as well as rulers of darkness. 1 John 5:19, Ephesians 6:12.

Also, God expects that we checkmate ourselves to know if we are not misrepresenting the light that we profess. 1 Corinthians 10:12. **Wise believers would have nothing to do with the works of darkness. Rather, our lives should reprove them by shining. Ephesians 5:11. Daniel (Daniel 6), Joseph (Genesis 39), Deborah (Judges 4) and Moses (Numbers 12) were a few Bible characters that shone amidst darkness in their generations. So no matter the darkness manifesting as corruption, violence and other evils in our contemporary world, we too can shine and we will shine brightly in Jesus name. Amen.**

## **3. What should characterize believers' shining as light in darkness?**

Our call is from darkness to light (1 Peter 2:9). It is not from one darkness into another darkness, hence the following should characterize our lives shining as light in darkness:

-sweet and pleasant living. Ecclesiastes 11:7.

-lightening the unsaved by preaching the gospel to them. Luke 2:32, Acts 13:47.

-hatred for evils. John 3:20.



-reflection of the Bright and Morning Star (that is Jesus). Revelation 22:16. The Bright and Morning Star reflects the truth. He reflects justice. He reflects love. He reflects humility. He reflects mercy. He reflects compassion. He reflects holiness. **He reflects light. He reflects light. He reflects light.**

❑ **CONCLUSION**

Those who walk with Jesus Christ have the light of life (John 8:12). They are the ones that God is seeking to shine as light in the midst of the darkness in the world. Will He find you?

**Let us pray.**

**OVERCOMING EVIL CHAMPIONS IN THE NEW YEAR – PART 1****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To open our eyes to the reality of evil champions of old and their existence in contemporary modern times.
2. To identify practical steps and weapons to overcoming evil champions in the New Year.
3. To know the benefits of victory over evil champions.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – 1 Samuel 17:51**

*Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – 1 Samuel 17:4, 32-51****□ INTRODUCTION**

A champion is someone who overcomes or wins a battle, be it physical, or spiritual. In a world of numerous wars, every man should strive to be a champion. **'For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh' (2 Corinthians 10:3).**

Our Bible passage gives us understanding that every man, family, church, and nation has ***a Goliath who must be slain, and whose head must be cut off (1 Samuel 17:51).***

As God's grace has brought you to Year 2024, may His mercies endure for you in the name of Jesus. Amen. However, it is your responsibility **NEVER** to allow evil champions reign in any area of your life both now and in future. Jesus Himself declared: ***"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27).***

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Identifying evil champions of old and in contemporary times
2. Practical steps to overcoming evil champions

**1. Identifying evil champions of old and in contemporary times**

-Goliath. 1 Samuel 17:4-11.

-Goliath's three sons, and his brother (Ishbibenob, Saph, Sippai, and Lahmi). 2 Samuel 21:15-22, 1 Chronicles 20:4-8.

-Giants. Job 16:14.

-Simon, the sorcerer. Acts 8:9-11.

-Elymas, the sorcerer and false prophet. Acts 13: 6-8.

- Witches, wizards, charmers and other agents of darkness.
- Sicknesses, diseases, infirmities, and other afflictions.
- Poverty, failure, stagnancy, and backwardness. Luke 16:20-21.
- Pride. 1 Samuel 2:3, Job 40:11-12.
- Laziness/Slothfulness. Proverbs 19:24; 21:25. **According to Proverbs 26:14, the only location of a lazy person is his bed.**
- Self accomplishments. Daniel 4:30-31. There's nothing you can achieve without God's help (2 Kings 6:27), so never see yourself as a success without the God factor. We are what we are by the grace of God (1 Corinthians 15:10).
- Carelessness (in relationships and other areas of one's life). Judges 14:1-3.
- Sin and all works of the flesh. Romans 7:19-25.

**All the aforementioned human evil champions suffered defeat and losses, even of their lives too. This will also be the portion of all evil men and women who see themselves as champions over your life in Jesus name. Amen.**

## **2. Practical steps to overcoming evil champions**

- Get engaged positively: This is because an idle hand is a tool for the devil (2 Samuel 11:1-2, Proverbs 22:29). The devil is far from a diligent mind; rather the devil needs an idle person to get his biddings done.
- While waiting, stop wasting: What are you doing during your waiting period? Isaiah 40:31. Seek God in your down times of rejection and disappointment. At the **'set time'**, you will be sorted out and settled (Psalm 102:13). Someone like a king will surely send for you because of your skill (1 Samuel 16:16-18). Even if no one or something is chasing you, please chase something for the betterment of your life.
- Take up challenges with boldness: 1 Samuel 17:26, 32. Your courage becomes an asset when others are tormented by fear (1 Samuel 17:24). The giant, no matter his size, will be terrified by your boldness (1 Samuel 17:36, Proverbs 28:1). So do not be intimidated and never underestimate the power of God in you for great accomplishments.
- Daily self-examination: It is expedient that a man constantly checks himself of little errors, faults and **'weights' (little foxes)** that affect him (Songs of Solomon 2:15, Hebrews 12:1-2) and then consecrate himself afresh to the Lord (Romans 12:1-2).

### **❑ CONCLUSION**

Evil champions are real. Anyone who cannot identify them will be continually be a perpetual prey because he or she can easily play into their territory, thereby **'suspecting' or 'accusing'** a wrong person. (Hosea 4:6).

### **❑ Next Week**

We shall conclude this topic by identifying weapons to overcome evil champions and also knowing the benefits of victory over evil champions.

**Let us pray.**

**OVERCOMING EVIL CHAMPIONS IN THE NEW YEAR – PART 2****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To open our eyes to the reality of evil champions of old and their existence in contemporary modern times.
2. To identify practical steps and weapons to overcoming evil champions.
3. To know the benefits of victory over evil champions.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – 1 Samuel 17:51**

*Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – 1 Samuel 17:4, 32-51****□ INTRODUCTION**

The Psalmist's declaration that **'blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight'** (Psalm 144:1) affirms that every man is destined to fight if he must get to the next God-desired level in life. This is because there are always contenders on ground to stop him or her. Jeremiah 1:19.

So no evil champion ought to have power or control over your life except you permit him through your **"spiritual inaction"**.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Weapons to overcome evil champions
2. Benefits of victory over evil champions

**1. Weapons to overcome evil champions**

-Praises and Worship to God. 2 Chronicles 20: 18-30.

-Boldness, and Strength in the Lord. 1 Samuel 17:32, 2 Chronicles 20:13-17, Proverbs 28:1, Ephesians 6:10.

-Unwavering faith in the Lord. 'Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: **but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts**, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.' 1 Samuel 17:45, James 1:6-8, Ephesians 6:16.

The weapons of our warfare are indeed not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. 2 Corinthians 10:4.

-The Sword of the Spirit (God's Word). Ephesians 6:17. Although **there was no sword in the hand of David in the fight against Goliath (1 Samuel 17:50)**, we are better equipped with the Word of God to defeat our today's Goliaths.

-Seeking the Lord's help by praying **always with the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, and the fire of Holy Ghost**. 2 Chronicles 20: 1-4, 9-12, Ephesians 6:18, 1Thessalonians.5:17, Philippians 2:9-11,

Revelation 12:11, 20:9. You may also need to fast to complement your prayer in order to overcome some evil champions. Matthew 17:21.

-Working in the Lord's vineyard, especially involvement in evangelism. Ephesians 6:15.

-Righteous living. Ephesians 6:14, John 14:30.

## **2. Benefits of victory over evil champions**

-All-round rest. 2 Chronicles 20:30.

-Joy! Joy!! Joy!!! 1 Samuel 18:7.

-Total freedom. Acts 16:26.

-A means of winning souls to God's kingdom. Acts 16: 27-34.

### **□ CONCLUSION**

The celebration of God's faithfulness comes after victory over evil champions. 'And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song.....***I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.....***' (2 Samuel 22). The whole of this chapter (51 verses) was devoted to thanking, praising, and worshipping the Lord who is the source of David's victory over the evil champion named Goliath.

**Let us pray.**

**FROM POTENTIAL TO PROSPERITY****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To remind ourselves of God's omnipotence.
2. To enjoy the abundant provisions of God for our prosperity.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Luke 16:12**

*And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Luke 16:10-12****□ INTRODUCTION**

God was confident of Abraham's ability to keep the great trans-generational blessings (Genesis 18:19a). Job's integrity was doubtless before God (Job 1:8). God was sure that Paul would propagate the greater part of the gospel of Christ (Acts 9:15-16) fulfilling John 10:16. These heroes of faith had the good soil that God was "looking for" to plant the seed of greatness in them. It pleases the Almighty to lavish His love and mercy on His Children; cf. 1 John 3:1a. As much as God delights in the prosperity of His children, He detests laziness and any form of waste or prodigality. My prayer is that our transition from potential to prosperity will not take too long. Amen.

**LESSON OUTLINE**

1. Some key demands of moving from potential to prosperity

**1. Some key demands of moving from potential to prosperity**

a. **Faithfulness** – Luke 16:10. This does not only refer to faith but also trustworthiness in all things. It demands a productive result from commitments. ***Here, the potential is faithfulness, and the output is greatness.*** Being trustworthy means possessing the capacity to fruitfully manage what is committed to one's care. Read 2 Timothy 2:2. Every Christian is built for greatness, but this is not a magical transformation. David was trained as a shepherd before He led God's people (Psalm 78:70-72 and Acts 13:22). Moses went through the basic training in Egypt before God made him to lead His people out of Egypt; he was found faithful – Hebrews 3:5. Faithfulness is a seed that bears

greatness as a fruity tree. If our potential will translate into the prosperity of God, we must be found faithful as good stewards (1 Corinthians 4:2).

b. **Humility** – Luke 14:11. Prosperity is from God. When God considers the lowly estate of a man, He assesses the level of humility in him, among other things, before opening him to prosperity. Is God partial? No. He tests everyone to know where their hearts are afterwards. Remember Jeshurun (the poetic name for Israel) in Deuteronomy 32:15-16. She forgot God, and God gave her up to the enemy (Deuteronomy 32:30). Also, Hezekiah, in 2 Chronicles 32:31, after many feats that God helped him achieve, did not remember God's mercies! **2 Chronicles 16:9** *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore, from henceforth thou shalt have wars.* KJV If you cannot stand for elders, you should not expect anyone to stand when you talk – Leviticus 19:32. How humble can you go for the sake of prosperity?

c. **Fearless Confidence** - Hebrews 10:35-36. A level of trust that cannot be persuaded or influenced by any contrary opinion or thought. It says, "Even though weeping stays all night, I know that joy comes with the breaking of the morning." The truth is that, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. Matthew 5:18-19. Any promise God gives through His Words, prophecy from His servants, or revelation will not fail. Even when there are contrary suggestions around, do not lose your confidence in His Word, Habakkuk 3:17-18.

d. **Praise and Worship**. Praise speaks of what God has done, while worship talks about who God is. When we offer these to God, the earth responds with a high yield and a prosperous harvest. Psalm 67:5-6. David won the heart of God, and this opens him to the abundance of the storehouse of God (1 Chronicles 22:14). Entering the presence of God with praise and thanksgiving in worship gives us access to heaven's treasury. Praise and worship to God is a sign of honour (1 Samuel 2:30). It also means recognising God as the source of prosperity, for the Lord makes some poor and others rich; He brings some down and lifts others. He lifts the poor from the dust and the needy from the garbage dump. He sets them among princes, placing them in seats of honour. 1 Samuel 2:7-8. ***The moment of songs of praise to God resulted in a 3-day harvest of riches from the enemies*** – 2 Chronicles 20:22, 25-26.

## ❑ CONCLUSION

God delights in our prosperity. He wants to showcase His riches and honor through us. He is Jehovah Jireh and supplies all that we need for His glory. Has the Lord entrusted little into your hands? Be faithful to it; it will multiply for your blessings. You may sow in tears, but you will reap with joy, and other people will share your good news. Do not let the situation in which you find yourself shut you off from God's presence. Do not fall for this trick of the devil. Rather, open your minds to the things of God, and He will open you to the depths of the abundant riches hidden in the dark places of the earth. Read 1 Chronicles 29:11–12. God has more than enough to handle all that we could ever need or want. Is He your source of prosperity?

**Let us pray.**







## **LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To encourage believers to cultivate the habit of appreciating God in good times and 'not so good times'.
2. To make brethren understand that 'Bad Times' is not an end in itself but a means to a glorious end.
3. To understand that God uses the bad times to either teach us a lesson or build our character and spiritual stamina.

## **KEY SCRIPTURE – 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

*In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. KJV*

## **BIBLE PASSAGE – Habakkuk 3:17-19**

### **□ INTRODUCTION**

God has completed the works of nature and salvation. He attests to this by giving everything He made a 'praise-worthy' mark (Genesis 1: 31). There is nothing we can give Him than our thanks. Another word for thanksgiving is 'blessing'. This means that when we thank God and appreciate what has been done to us, we draw more blessings to our lives (Psalm 100:1-5). Thanksgiving should never be restricted to an event; it should be a lifestyle. We need to be thankful at all times so that our 'tanks' will be full. David states that every day is an opportunity to bless God with all that is within us (Psalm 103:1-5).

In our Bible passage, Habakkuk was a prophet who vowed to be thankful in hard times. According to him, we should still be thankful (a) when the provision of God changes because God never changes (Habakkuk 3:17, Malachi 3:6), (b) for His salvation even when we are suffering because life itself is uncertain and He has promised us eternal life in heaven ((Habakkuk 3:18, John 3:16; 5:24) and (c) when passing through trials as the Lord strengthens us for victory in Christ (Habakkuk 3:19, Psalm 27:1, Philippians 4:13).

Thanksgiving is therefore a powerful weapon that moves the hand of God when the devil seems to be winning the battle. With praises and thanksgiving, we bring down the walls of Jericho in order to win the war (2 Chronicles 20:22-24). This is why thanksgiving is more pleasing to God especially when we are in distress. When we want to move circumstances, we should pray. When we want to move the hand of God, we should give thanks. The bible says that He dwells in the praises of His people (Psalm 22: 3). May God not allow stones to praise Him in our stead in Jesus name! Amen.

## LESSON OUTLINES

1. How to cultivate a lifestyle of thanksgiving
2. Why we should show thanksgiving to God in all seasons
3. Benefits of Thanksgiving to a victorious Christian living

### 1. How to cultivate a lifestyle of thanksgiving

God expects us to express gratitude for His wondrous acts (Psalm 104: 1-3). We should make out time to express our gratitude to God in ways that we are comfortable with. Whether the situation is good or unpleasant, we should open our hearts of thanksgiving to God. Here are some ways of cultivating a lifestyle of Thanksgiving:

- I. **Dancing Joyfully:** David is a King after God's heart for many reasons. One of the most vital ones is his selfless and utterly 'crazy' way of giving God a dance offering. If any Christian needs to know how to show appreciation to God, check out David's play book (1 Chronicles 15:29).
- II. **Sing unto the Lord:** All creatures of nature sing to the Lord. You should not wait for Choir and musicians before giving God the fruit of your thanksgiving. Your voice is your most potent instrument, use it. It is your treasure of things to come, express it (Psalm 19:1-4).
- III. **Make a joyful noise:** The Bible states: 'Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord' (Psalm 150:6). We should make a joyful noise unto our God even when things don't go our way. Our voice should not cower to satanic inventions. We should come boldly to the throne of grace with a joyful noise to shatter all his works. (Psalm 100:1-5).
- IV. **Sing a new song:** (Psalm 96:1-4). We are a product of creation and God wants us to express our creative instincts in our thanksgiving moment with Him. Just let your mind capture the gratitude of your emotion in rhythm and sounds. Let God savour the sweetness of your song.
- V. **Testimony:** Another sure-fire way of getting the attention of God is through our positive confessions and appreciation. Even in our darkest moments, we should see the silver linings. Learn to strengthen the faith of other brethren with your testimonies. (Revelation 12:11).
- VI. **Be a Giver:** God gave His only Son. Hence, we should also be ready to freely give our time, resources, gifts and other endowment as a token of thanksgiving. Don't forget that He loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

## **2. Why we should show thanksgiving to God in all seasons**

Many are the seasons of life. No matter your present circumstances, you are better than millions among the billions on earth. Despite Job's most miserable plight, he maintained a hopeful mind-set by declaring that 'I know my Redeemer liveth...' (Job 19:25). God does have a sense of humour. What you can imagine as the most bizarre event could be the best option in sight of God. Indeed, everything works for good to God's children. We sometime ask why bad things happen to good folks. Why should a good person die? Why should the righteous person suffer affliction and persecution? The truth is that God is never ignorant of our challenges. Jeremiah 29:11, 32:27. Like the three Hebrew lads, we must go through 'fire' for character development and also allow God to prove His awesome strength.

## **3. Benefits of Thanksgiving to a victorious Christian living (Romans 8:28).**

When we thank God in all seasons, He gives us victory. Aside from this, thanksgiving is the food of God. The bible admonishes us to look at the brighter side. Christians should pay less attention to their present predicaments and focus on the bigger picture that brings them to the place of royalty (Daniel 3:26-30). We will also be belittling the devil, psyching ourselves mentally and creating a pathway for our victory when we thank God in all seasons, good or bad.

### **❑ CONCLUSION**

Let us roll out the drums to spite the devil and naysayers. Nothing gives our God the utmost satisfaction and joy for us than showing a spirit of gratitude regardless of the situation (Psalm 105:1-3). In other words, **Thanksgiving Anyhow!**

**Let us pray.**

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the divine mandate of the ministry of women.
2. To gear up women to their duties and responsibilities in all facets of life.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Judges 4:6-9**

*And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-*naphtali*, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of *Naphtali* and of the children of *Zebulun*? 7 And I will draw unto thee to the river *Kishon* *Sisera*, the captain of *Jabin*'s army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand. 8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell *Sisera* into the hand of a woman. And *Deborah* arose, and went with Barak to *Kedesh*. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Proverbs 31: 10-31****❑ INTRODUCTION**

It is unimaginable what the world could be without women. This is not an overstatement; God who formed man and made him a living soul realized the man was not complete. This is first of all a divine recognition of the importance of women not only in the life of men but also in the universal plan of God holistically.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Understanding the ministry of women
2. Case studies: Queen Esther and Queen Jezebel (Interactive: Esther 4 and 1Kings 21:1-25)

**1. Understanding the ministry of women**

- Primarily, woman was formed out of man for the purpose of being a help meet to him. Genesis 2:18 (created for man. 1 Corinthians 11: 8-9).
- The help meet ministry of women is a work and a divine responsibility.
- A help meet is a home maker, who in turn is a society builder. She is a mother of nations. The Proverbs 31 woman.
- The ministry of a woman is that of helper, intercessor, counsellor, and comforter: doing more of her works and winning on her knees. – Anna, the prophetess (Luke 2:36-37), Esther (Esther 4:16).
- Women are naturally endowed with power and influence; they can successfully use it to achieve their goal. They are most of the time a force behind every failure and success. It was women that composed a song for Saul and David (1 Samuel 18:7). Consider the role of

Mary Magdalene and other women in the ministry of Jesus (Luke 8:2-3, Acts 13:50). Delilah and Jezebel's roles also come into remembrance.

- The power of transformation: The state of a family, church, fellowship or any gathering and even nations can be determined and consequently transformed by the spiritual state of the women therein. A good example is Esther.
- Though weaker vessels, yet created with abilities and strengths to multi task than men. (Proverbs 31:10-31).
- Women are wired to communicate and talk more than men and easily prone to deceit and error. For example, Eve in Genesis 3:1-6.
- They can be spiritually inclined and sensitive to things around them than men. Examples are: Abigail (1 Samuel 25:2-3, 14-20, 23-35) and The Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:9).

## **2. Case studies: Queen Esther and Queen Jezebel (Interactive: Esther 4 and 1Kings 21:1-25)**

### **CONCLUSION**

The expectation is for every woman to be challenged by identifying her God given mandate, stand up to her roles, find her space and occupy it dutifully in accordance to divine instruction.

### **Next week**

We shall continue this topic by the grace of God as we examine the attributes of the woman that works to win.

**Let us pray.**

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the divine mandate of the ministry of women.
2. To gear up women to their duties and responsibilities in all facets of life.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Esther 4:16**

*Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Proverbs 31: 10-31****❑ INTRODUCTION**

Success is not just a game of chance in life; there is always a place of wisdom, sacrifices, strategies and many efforts that result to success.

**LESSON OUTLINE**

1. What characterize the woman that is working to win?

**1. What characterize the woman that is working to win?**

**-Self-Discovery:** It all starts from self-discovery. Who are you, woman? What do you stand for? Where are you standing? If these and some other questions about you are not answered, life becomes an illusion. Even though, you are a wonder of God (Psalm 139:14), you must still be able to define yourself, discover and accept your person.

**-Purposeful:** The primary purpose of a woman as a help meet for the man has a far-reaching effect and influence on the world around her. At the same time, there is a specific purpose for every individual woman. Women have a position to occupy in the agenda of God and His power is available in that position to win the race. Judges 4: 4-5, **5:7.**

Being a woman goes beyond being a wife and a mother; **'THERE IS MORE TO BEING A WOMAN'.**

**-Fear of God:** Wisdom of winning women is in the fear of God. A deep awe and reverence for who God is and avoiding any form of evil in order to please God. Proverbs 4:5-9.

**-Word of God:** There is no success or victory outside the word of God. Herein lies the power of good success. The word is her inspiration and strength. She does not walk, stand or sit among sinners; rather, she delights in the word of God. Psalm 1:1-3.

**-Praying and intercession:** Standing in gap as a praying woman and intercessor. Being a help meet is not a carnal task. Being a mother of successful children is far beyond her. Being a glorious daughter of Zion requires the grace of God. Her knees are the place of power where she gets helps and strength to fulfil her mandates and where battles are fought and won. Luke 18:1-7.



**-Sacrificial:** For every winning woman, there must have been works of sacrifices, denials, perseverance and pain. Pleasures must have been forfeited and life would have been risked. Until the woman sees herself as a seed, she will grumble and complain all through. Proverbs 31:28, 31.

**-Wisdom and understanding:** A winning woman builds her home with wisdom and established it with understanding and that is what makes her house filled with all riches, peace, joy and success. Proverbs 14:1, 24:3-4, 31:26.

**-Discipline:** This sets in order, boundaries and enforces restraints. It is not to confine her unnecessarily but freeing her and guaranteeing her safety, self-control and secure her from failing and falling. Hebrews 12:11.

**-Diligence and Industrious:** Hardworking, steadfast and consistent in her work, she does not eat the bread of idleness. Also, she is a good manager of resources (time, money, people and assets), organised, dutiful and full of strength, not given to frivolity. Proverbs 31:13-19, 27.

**-Character:** Her home and her work, impact and relationship with others are definition of her character. Pretence cannot be hidden for long, bad character always loses out; beauty is never the same as character. Proverbs 21:9, 19.

## ❑ CONCLUSION

“Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates” (Proverbs 31:29-31).

**Let us pray.**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the important attributes in the Lord's Prayer.
2. To give us a systematic guide to how we pray.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Luke 11:1**

*And it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Matthew 6:9-15****❑ INTRODUCTION**

In our Bible passage, Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, and this pattern of prayer is quoted by millions of people sometimes alone and sometimes in a chorus manner, thus unifying the body of Christ irrespective of denominations. In this model of universal prayer, renowned as it is, we frequently overlook the genuine beauty found in its meaning.

Jesus did not just want to give us words to tell God or teach us the exact words to use in prayer, but He leads us into a rich and meaningful way of communicating with and hearing from the Lord.

It is not all about telling Him our petitions, what we want or need but being in His presence regularly and the great change or transformation that our relationship with Him can bring about in our lives.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Attributes of the Lord's Prayer
2. How to pray the Lord's Prayer

**1. Attributes of the Lord's Prayer**

–a prayer that calls for a relationship with the Father (Matthew 6:9). Only God's children (John 1:12) can call Him **"Our Father"**. As "Our Father", He takes us up when our earthly father forsakes us (Psalm 27:10). He also pities us (Psalm 103:3). Even whether we still have a living biological father or not, God remains our only everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6).

–a prayer that makes us approach God carefully and cautiously with worship and adoration.

**"Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9)** is an expression of deep reverence toward God which we should adopt when we approach Him. Leviticus 22:2, Psalm 29:2; 89:7, Daniel 2:20, Hebrews 12:28.

–a prayer for the return of Christ. **“Thy Kingdom come”** (Matthew 6:10) points to the anticipated return of the Lord which will usher national and individual peace, joy unspeakable, comfort, justice, glory, holiness and the removal of original curse placed upon mankind.

## **2. How to pray the Lord’s Prayer**

The prayer model started with acknowledgement of the Divine One: **‘Our Father which art in heaven’**, followed by praise and adoration of Him: **‘Hallowed be thy name’** (Matthew 6:9).

**‘Thy kingdom come’** (Matthew 6:10) is a call for the Lord’s return to establish His kingdom. This is because His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).

**‘Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven’** (Matthew 6:10) helps us to desire and pray for God’s will and not ours to be done in our lives. We have a great mentor in Jesus Christ who, while on earth, never sought to do His own will (John 5:30, 6:38) but rather declared to God: **‘not my will, but thine, be done’** (Luke 22:42).

**‘Give us this day our daily bread’** (Matthew 6:11) is a prayer for provisions for our daily needs and blessings. *If God fed Israel daily with manna for 40 years, He will surely provide for all our daily needs.* David too enjoyed God’s help (provisions) **‘day by day’**. 1 Chronicles 12:22.

**‘And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors’** (Matthew 6:12) is a prayer for reconciliation between us and God as well as between us and fellow men.

**‘And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil’** (Matthew 6:13) is a prayer for God to guide and guard us against the devil and his works.

**‘For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen’** (Matthew 6:13) is admonishing us to return all glory to God whether He answers our prayers or not.

Also, another important thing to note in Our Lord's Prayer is the use of the words: **Our** and **Us**. This means that as children of God, we are supposed to be one big family, each person being a member of the Lord's body. Matthew 18:20, 1 Corinthians 12:12.

### **❑ CONCLUSION**

The Lord’s Prayer is a free non-discriminatory access card to His presence. We must therefore use it to have a direct access to God, receive forgiveness and provisions from Him, strength for our spirit man, gain wisdom that is greater than the wiles of the enemy, change our lives and give Him all glory.

**Let us pray.**

## **LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To highlight and examine the indisputable power of the light of life in Jesus Christ.
2. To appreciate and understand that life without Christ is empty and vain.
3. Encourage brethren to shine forth the light of Christ through works and not mere words.

## **KEY SCRIPTURE – John 8: 12**

*Then spake Jesus again to them, saying, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. KJV*

## **BIBLE PASSAGE – John 1: 1-9**

### **❑ INTRODUCTION**

Suffice it to state that without light, there is no life (Genesis 1:3). That is why we all, like a plant, bend toward light. In Biology, we understand that 'photosynthesis' is the process by which plants use sunlight, water and carbon dioxide to create oxygen and energy in the form of sugar. Just as sunlight is essential for emotional and physical health, so exposure to the light of Jesus is essential for spiritual health.

As human beings, we are constantly looking for something to illuminate the meaning of our lives. Jesus' life is union with God. It is the divine life made available to us by faith as the result of Jesus' earthly life and death.

Jesus is the source of all life. He is our Creator and Sustainer of our human lives. But in John's gospel we are introduced to a new kind of life. The Greek word is Zoe. This is the unique word for the eternal, spiritual, life of God. This is the life that we can have. This Zoe life that Jesus offers is also our light (John 1:5).

## **LESSON OUTLINES**

1. The old nature and the futility of life
2. The regenerated life ushers in the light of Christ
3. Living a victorious Christian life

### **1. The old nature and the futility of life**

For the 'unconverted' and religious mind, it is absurd to say that life begins when one accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This is because there are many things that promise us and point us toward "real life": cars, insurance, properties, vacations, clothes - these are all sold with the promises of a better life if you buy them. But only the life that Christ offers will change your human life to the life of a true image bearer. 2 Corinthians 5:17, John 3: 3-5, Romans 6: 23.

The amazing statement of Jesus in John 8:12 is a reminder of God's faithfulness during the wilderness years. During that time God guided the nation of Israel by a fiery pillar - a giant light (Exodus 14: 19-20).

## **2. The regenerated life ushers in the light of Christ**

In a world full of mountains of troubles to keep the light of Jesus, the Son of God, from getting through, God strategically places His children to act as reflectors, meaning that they can be described as **'SON REFLECTORS'**. One such person was John the Baptist, who came "to bear witness of the Light" – JESUS – who gives light "to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (John 1:7; Luke 1:79).

The book of John 15: 1-5 also gives us a graphic description of how we cannot survive without Him. A suckling baby enjoys the breast of the mother. Fish cannot survive without water. Also, the vine cannot bear fruits unless it abides in the vine. Our victory is assured only if we abide in Jesus Christ (John 15:4-7). Our basic instinct and other forces of nature submit to the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 2: 9-11). Darkness has no place where light shines through. Sickness, poverty, death and other demonic patterns surrender dominion to a carrier of Christ's light (John 3:19). It is a life of absolute triumph and spiritual dominance.

## **3. Living a victorious Christian life**

Solomon is inarguably the wisest and richest king in human history. His stupendous wealth is given more graphical details in 1 Kings 10: 16-23. However, he summed up everything as vanity! (Ecclesiastes 5:10). Hence, we can pontificate by the grace of God through our Lord, Jesus Christ that we are living a more accomplished and fulfilled life than Solomon and other biblical icons of the Old Testament. Mark 16:17-18. Christians carry a light that have never be known since the beginning of the world. We have conquered death through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:52-55).

## **❑ CONCLUSION**

Christians should understand that life is not measured by how rich, famous and grandiose one appear (Luke 12:15). Everything just drifts away like dust in the wind. Although Jesus Himself does not guarantee a safe passage in life, He promises to be with us all the way (John 16:33). A life without Christ, the Light, is in crises which mean darkness. Indeed, only this Light, (that is Jesus Christ) can dispel every scary darkness.

Jesus is the Light that gives us power to become children of God and thankfully, every believer is in a position to reflect His light into the world's dark places. In the light of God's love and grace and truth, we can find courage, help and strength to live for Him.

**Let us pray.**





**THE DYNAMICS OF POWER – PART 1****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the working of the power of God.
2. To engage with the divine provisions to get power.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Acts 1:7-8**

*And he said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth". KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Ephesians 3:20-21****□ INTRODUCTION**

Moving an object from point to point or executing a task is done by power and it is physical. To a Christian, power is the "working effects" of the authority in Christ Jesus being received through moments of prayer. Authority means "permission to act". Power refers to the activity that follows what is authorized. The enforcement of a will, command, or authority is done by power. For instance, witnessing for Christ is done by power – Acts 1:8.

Our understanding of the working of the power of God should create a thirst or desire in us to acquire it and ask for more. *You don't deserve any power if you are not subject to a higher power.* Romans 13:1. Power, here, is spiritual, invisible, yet backed up by God alone - this is the power of God. God's omnipotence is gracefully distributed within the body of Christ (Christians) by the Holy Ghost – 1 Corinthians 12:11 as He pleases.

What is the source of this power, and who can execute it? We shall discuss these and more in this lesson. May we increase in the power of God for great exploits and finish strong. Amen.

**LESSON OUTLINE**

1. Some Characteristics of the Power of God

**1. Some Characteristics of the Power of God**

*a. It is God's gift to believers.* John 3:27. God's treasures are in the custody of His trustees.



**b. It is the promise of God in Christ Jesus.** Acts 1:8; Romans 12:6. We obtain the power of God through our redemption from self, sin, and Satan. Our new position in Christ is backed up by the power of God to witness to others the good news (the gospel of Christ).

**c. It is for effective work in service.** Acts 1:8; 4:33. **Acts 6:8** *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.* Let us also read – Luke 4:36; 9:1. Pulling down strongholds, casting out demons and delivering the Word of God by authority are some of the effects of the power of God in us (Ephesians 3:20).

**d. It complements the grace of God in a believer.** Acts 4:33; 2 Peter 1:2-3; Ephesians 3:7. The Power of God + The Grace of God = The Wonders of God. This power is for work. It is productively expressed in us by the Holy Spirit through the grace of God.

**Do successful businessmen who do not know God also have this power?**

The difference is the grace of God, which they do not have. A Christian who ventures into the same business will excel supernaturally, not by competition but by the grace of God. Recall David's declaration about his victories – 2 Samuel 22:33-35.

**e. It increases our hope in God.** Romans 15:23. The proofs of God in our ministry strengthen our hope and trust in God and His promises.

**f. It makes us sons of God** by being children of God (John 1:12). The power of God in us activates the rich deposit of God's riches (grace) and goodness (mercy) shown to us. So, power is for work and not for the title; it is the power to become sons.

**g. It is our access to living a godly life.** 2 Peter 1:3.

**h. It is the access to true success.** Deuteronomy 8:18. God gives us the power (not muscles or violent features) to discover wealth, lofty ideas, and executable visions that are supported by willing and like-minded people. This is the work of God's power through our abilities.

#### **Next week**

We shall discuss how to acquire the power of God and how to be more productive with it. May God not regret entrusting His resources to our hands. Amen.

**Let us pray.**

**THE DYNAMICS OF POWER – PART 2****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the working of the power of God.
2. To engage with the divine provisions to get power.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Acts 1:7-8**

*And he said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth". KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Ephesians 3:20-21****❑ INTRODUCTION**

Sometimes, other references in the Bible interchange the words "power" and "authority" cf. Acts 1:7; Luke 10:19 and Luke 4:32 in the KJV, NKJV, or NIV. Power, in this context, does not refer to a destructive or violent engagement or execution of duties in the body of Christ (2 Corinthians 13:10). It is rather a proof of quiet strength. ***A man of authority is first under authority.*** Let us discuss how we can obtain this dynamic power of God according to the Scriptures.

**LESSON OUTLINE**

1. How to engage the Power of God

**1. How to engage the Power of God**

Acts 8:14-20 – Simon, the sorcerer, thought he could buy the power of God. If this were possible, only the rich men of this world would have the power of God. Some of the means to engage the power of God are these:

- a. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit.** Acts 1:8. Water baptism can precede the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Until the Holy Spirit's baptism, the power to do mighty works was absent. Every believer must be baptised in the Holy Spirit for power. Let us read Acts 8:14-17; 19:1-5.
- b. **Time in Prayer.** Quality time in meaningful prayer will result in evident power. Jesus left the place of prayer and fasting in the wilderness with the power of the Spirit (God), and His

fame spread everywhere – Luke 4:14. We become more powerful outside, in ministry, as much as we encounter the power of God in our private moments with God. Exodus 34:28-30. ***Relevance in ministry is the depth of how much you relate to God.***

- c. **Patience and Obedience.** ***You can't be entrusted with the power of God if you can't wait an hour with Him*** (Matthew 26:24). The disciples were instructed to wait for the power of God in Jerusalem, not anywhere else – Luke 24:49. This power is like a cloth that is only given to the patient, obedient, and disciplined disciples. ***The more powerful God is us, the humbler we become.***
- d. **Knowledge of Grace.** Ephesians 3:7 '... of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power'. NKJV. If you have discovered the dimension of the grace of God in you, you should learn to know more of this grace. Thus, the power of God will be more effective through the same grace on you.
- e. **More service, more power.** Isaiah 40:31. Waiting on God means being at His beck and call or in a “get-ready mode” to respond to any demands from Him. The strength of those who do these will always be renewed, refreshed, and refilled for more. You can only fortify a load-bearing pillar. Are you a pillar (support) or a ‘piler’ (dumper or heaper)?

## ❑ CONCLUSION

We become born-again, new creatures fashioned after God's righteousness. The next is baptism – by water or the Holy Spirit. Yet, we, as newborn babes, will be nurtured into more truths and knowledge of Christ Jesus. Most believers dwell too long as babes in the Lord. Spiritual exercises and activities are profitable for spiritual growth. This makes us more sons of God after being children of God. In this state, we need the power of God for more exploits and to showcase the riches of God deposited in us at redemption. John 13:17 – ‘If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them’. God is not wasteful of His power or a respecter of persons. He deposits His good treasures into tested hands. Are you one?

**Let us pray.**

**CHARACTER STUDY OF DEBORAH: MOTHER IN ISRAEL****LESSON OBJECTIVE**

1. To understand how Deborah's character is applicable to the generality of Christians.
2. To make Christian women understand and equally play their multidimensional roles in the society.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Judges 5:7**

*The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Judges 4: 1-24****❑ INTRODUCTION**

In the culture of Bible times, women generally found their identity through men: fathers, husbands, or even sons. However, they occasionally serve independently in leadership roles as judges, prophetesses and deaconesses. The Bible is replete with examples of women who did exploits in their service to God and humanity and are therefore worthy of commendation and emulation.

One of such women was Deborah, a prophetess who became a judge in Israel after the death of Ehud. She was instrumental to the liberation of the Israelites from the hands of the Canaanites who have been oppressing them for twenty years (Judges 4:1-4). A woman of faith indeed who believed that with God, enemies can be conquered.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Qualities of Deborah
2. Some roles of Women in the society
3. Lessons from the life of Deborah

**1. Qualities of Deborah**

- Sacrificial leadership. She agrees to accompany Barak to battle. Judges 4: 9.
- Courage. She summons Barak to deliver Israel. Judges 4:6, Psalm 112:8.
- Motivator. She inspires Barak to action. Judges 4:14, Esther 4:12-16.
- Obedience. 1 Samuel 12:14.
- Faith in God. Hebrews 11:6.
- Gratitude. She praises God for victory. Judges 5:1-31, Luke 17:18.
- Rebuker of indolence. She rebukes the indifference of the tribes. Judges 5:16-17, 23, Proverbs 27:5. Deborah was the only woman who both ruled Israel and gave military orders to men.

## 2. Some roles of Women in the society

- Motherly Duties. 1 Samuel 2:19, Judges 5:7.
- Helpfulness. Acts 9:36.
- Service to God. Romans 16:1, 6, Philippians 4:3.
- Hospitality. 2 Kings 4:8-10.
- Peace making. 1 Samuel 20: 15-22, Matthew 5:9.

## 3. Lessons from the life of Deborah

- The invincibility of God. Judges 5:12-13.
- Confidence. Deborah was a woman of faith who had confidence in God and in what He can do, so also we as Christians should have this trait. Proverbs 28:1.
- The mercies of God endureth for ever. Daniel 9:9.
- God can make use of any instrument to achieve great results. 1 Corinthians 1:27-29.
- We should not be faint-hearted like Barak. Judges 4:8
- Deborah sang songs of victory to God. So also we as children of God should praise Him for our victory. Judges 5:1-31.

### ❑ CONCLUSION

God gave rest to the children of Israel for 40 years through Deborah (Judges 5:31). When we too are on the LORD's side, there will be rest and peace in Him. Matthew 11: 28-30. Finally, every woman should emulate the qualities of Deborah. ***No woman should sit on the fence when the occasion demands for action to be taken.***

**Let us pray.**

**THE DANGER OF MARITAL DIVORCE – PART 1****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To identify causes of divorce in marriage and how to avoid them.
2. To know the consequences of divorce in marriage.
3. To counsel couples in shaky marriages.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Luke 16:18**

*Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband commiteth adultery. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Mark 10:1 - 12****□ INTRODUCTION**

In the beginning, God looked at the loneliness of Adam and decided it was good for him to have Eve as his wife (Genesis 2:18, 20-23). Marital loneliness is therefore not in the plan of God for man. No wonder, Jesus told the Pharisees: 'He which made them at the beginning made them male and female' (Matthew 19:4) and hence 'from the beginning it was not so' (Matthew 19:8).

It therefore means that marriage is for life (1 Corinthians 7:10-13, 39), hence divorce is not permitted by God. **'For the Lord God of Israel, saith that He hateth putting away' (Matthew 2:16a).**

Divorce is the legal separation or dissolution of a married couple by a court of law. For divorce to happen there must have been **legal joining** of a man and a woman by an instituted or authorised body. Unfortunately too, some people also separate from their spouses without any legal procedure.

Divorce indeed represents a major problem facing many homes today, especially in these days of perilous times.

The courts of law grant divorce for reasons such as **adultery, cruelty, desertion, drunkenness, neglect of responsibilities, domestic violence, sexual abuse, crime, bigamy, incompatibility, 'irreconcilable' differences, etc.**

Nevertheless, for a Christian believer, marriage is a crucial, serious commitment and he or she can remarry **only** as a result of the death of his or her partner. May the good Lord spare the lives of our spouses in Jesus name. Amen.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. How to avoid divorce in marriage

**1. How to avoid divorce in marriage**

Many times, we do not set out to marry with the aim of divorcing later because we all want to be happy in a blissful union. But we live in a world influenced by the devil who subtly influences our lives' decision in ways we are ignorant of. Some of the ways to avoid divorce are:

- Allow God to choose a partner for you, for He is the one that created all beings and only He knows the one that He had specially made for you. Do not choose for 'political' or economic reasons or any reasons that are not spiritual or godly. In other words, let God be the foundation of the union. Genesis 2: 21-22.
- Be patient and wait for the right time before starting the journey of marriage. Overcoming divorce begins with choosing right. Genesis 2:24.
- Abhor pride. 1 Peter 3:1.
- Avoid sexual immorality. Matthew 19:9, Romans 7:3, Hebrews 13:4.
- Establish a family altar, and always pray together even amidst challenges such as delay in child bearing, spiritual attacks, etc. Matthew 18:19.
- Husbands are to love their wives, and wives are also to be submissive to their husbands. Ephesians 5:22, 25, 1 Corinthians 7:3.
- Do not allow unnecessary pressure or external interference (from friends and extended family members) in your marital affairs. Practice oneness with your spouse. Genesis 2:24.
- Maintain an open and healthy communication at all times. This includes dealing with past hurts through forgiveness of each other. Proverbs 15:1, Ephesians 4:15, 29, James 1:19-20.
- The fear of God must be in the heart of the couple. Ephesians 5:21.
- Avoid unequal yoke with unbelieving couples. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.
- Never compare your spouse and marriage with any other. 2 Corinthians 10: 12.
- Always Invite God into your midst when taking decisions. Proverbs 3:5-6.
- Like any other life challenge, always seek wisdom of God to overcome your marital challenges, and avoid taking hasty decision. Proverbs 4: 7; 14:1.

## **❑ CONCLUSION**

We must have the understanding that our marriage depicts the union between Jesus and the Church and hence should glorify God (Ephesians 5:32). So if Jesus will not divorce the Church, we too should strive to overcome our so-called irreconcilable differences that can lead to divorce. Moreover, our salvation is more important than our marriage which, at times, has the tendency to make us hurt our spouses or to seek revenge.

## **❑ Next Week**

We shall conclude this topic by examining the inherent consequences of marital divorce and scriptural counsel to couples in shaky marriages.

**Let us pray.**



**THE DANGER OF MARITAL DIVORCE – PART 2****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To identify causes of divorce in marriage and how to avoid them.
2. To know the consequences of divorce in marriage.
3. To counsel couples in shaky marriages.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Luke 16:18**

*Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband commiteth adultery. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Mark 10:1 - 12****□ INTRODUCTION**

Marital divorce is not in the plan of God (Matthew 19:6) because of the great danger that is involved in doing so. Even in the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve sinned, God never separated them, but only took them out of the garden and pronounced judgement upon them. Genesis 3:9-24. In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus, too, advised the people against **'a writing of divorcement'** (Matthew 19:7-8).

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. The Consequences of Marital Divorce
2. Godly counsel for couples in shaky marriages

**1. The Consequences of Marital Divorce**

Although divorce between couple is hated by God (Malachi 2: 14-16), it (divorce) has also never been recorded to be an easy or pleasant experience, even in the most 'amicable breakups'. From meeting with lawyers to dividing assets and figuring out how to move on after the eventual split are just a few things that make divorce cumbersome.

Some other consequences of divorce are:

- It brings about unfulfilled destinies of the couple. Malachi 2:15b.
- It will attract grievous punishment from God. Malachi 2:11-12.
- It is a tragedy that has no positive gain for either of the partners.
- It brings about loneliness, bruised and broken heart, mental instability and inferiority complex syndrome, even in the society.
- It leads the partners to start cheating on each other, for example, committing adultery. Matthew 19: 9, Ephesians 5:5.
- Loss of fortunes and forfeiture of valuable assets, spousal support, definite or indefinite monthly payments such as child support or any form of support for your ex-partner might be financially challenging for a long time.
- Expensive judicial proceedings. For example, legal expenses in terms of court filing processes, hiring a lawyer, etc.

- Sharing of joint assets can be very exhausting and joint financial obligations can lead to unresolved, permanent bitterness.
- It can cause spiritual attacks by the time each party 'remarries'.
- There is much stress in going through the process of divorce.
- It will have a great negative impact on the couple's children physically, emotionally, academically, spiritually, socially and their mental intelligence. Judges 11: 1-2.

***-If not well handled, it can cause separation from God, and ultimately leads to hell. Revelation 21:8.***

## **2. Godly counsel for couples in shaky marriages**

- If the marriage procedures had not been completed, for example: yet-to-be-paid dowry, approval of parents, and such like, urgent effort should be made to tidy up all necessary processes. Romans 13:7-8.
- Couples should identify sources of conflicts threatening their homes, and manage them. Genesis 21:8-14.
- Couples should pray and study the scriptures together and also spend more time with each other. Luke 1:5-6.
- Take all issues to Jesus and try avoiding by all means third parties' involvement, except the couples are led by the Spirit of God, and only to a mature Christian counsellor. Titus 2:3-5.

### **□ CONCLUSION**

God's will is for us to get married, and have peace in our homes. Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5. For our marriages to succeed, we must put aside all manner of distractions, ***tuck in our egos*** and feelings, and follow the will of God.

**Let us pray.**

**BIBLICAL PATTERN OF TRAINING CHILDREN****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand that parenting is a divine task and stewardship that must be accounted for.
2. To prepare godly children that will carry on the next generation for God.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Proverbs 22:6**

*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Deuteronomy 6:6-9****□ INTRODUCTION**

Biblical pattern of training children is to make a deliberate effort in teaching, training and nurturing children according to God's instruction and commandments.

It is parenting by teaching and training up children to become responsible and God-fearing generation, that is, ambassadors of God on earth and citizens of Kingdom of God.

Parenting is responsibility, stewardship and highly rewarding.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Parents, know these
2. Training up in a godly way

**1. Parents, know these:**

- Children are God's heritage. Psalm 127:3.
- Parenting is a divine task, we must therefore live up to it, lest we become like Eli, the priest. 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-36, 3:11-14.
- Parents are the first and best teachers to the children.
- We need to catch them early for God. If we truly 'catch them young', they will become great instruments in the hand of God for their generation.
- Training of children is the primary responsibility of BOTH parents at HOME. The church and school are to support the spiritual or biblical training from home, hence the choice of school and church is very key to child training.
- No two children are the same. Genesis 25:27.
- Gender consideration is required. Psalm 144:12, Job 42:15.
- Favouritism in children upbringing is a present menace and future calamity. Genesis 25:28.

**2. Training up in a godly way**

- Dedicate and consecrate them to God right from the beginning (from the womb). 1 Samuel 1:28, Luke 1:44 and 2:22.
- Teach them ALL about your God persistently and consistently. Genesis 18:19, Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:4-9, **Psalm 78:1-7.**

- Train them to have deep and cordial relationship with God as early as possible in life. **Deuteronomy 31:13**, Mathew 19:14, 2 Timothy 1:5. Make them to see Jesus Christ as a model, mentor and friend at all times. 1 Corinthians 11:1.
- Train them to fear, love and obey God. This is the only way to live holy and righteously. Deuteronomy 6:3- 6, Proverbs 1:7-9.
- Consistently ask for the will of God for their lives. Judges 13:12-13.
- Train them to be absolutely dependent on God alone in all things. Proverbs 3: 5-6.
- Affirm and insist on family values consistently: holiness, righteousness, integrity, honesty, purity, etc. Deuteronomy 11:18-20, Jeremiah 35:1-6, 8.
- Observing a fervent family altar: the word, prayers, fasting and God's service. Joshua 1:8, 24:15.
- Make efforts to let them appreciate the love of God and His purposes for their lives. Jeremiah 1:5, 1 John 3:1.
- Teach them obedience, honour and respect for parents, elders, neighbours and authorities. Genesis 28:7, Proverbs 23:22, Ephesian 6:1-3.
- Parenting is practical; be an example and be available. Philippians 4:9, 1Timothy 4:12.
- Protect them from ungodly association/negative peer pressure, influences and enticement. 2 Samuel 13:1-15, Proverbs 13: 20, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Proverbs 1:10. Therefore, share in their personal experiences. Hebrews 4:15.
- Training includes instruction, commandment, admonition, chastisement, love and discipline activities. Do not spare the rod but apply it appropriately and in love. Proverbs **23:13-14**.
- Biblical training's emphasis is sacrificial love, compassion and empathy. Proverbs 3:12, Luke 15:20.

## ❑ CONCLUSION

Ultimately, Christian Children are to be trained and prepared to shine in the darkness of this world, to carry on the baton and become torch bearers for God's kingdom in their generation. Failure or neglect of biblical training of children will breed Satan-inspired adults and leaders like Karl Marx, Adolf Hitler, Stalin, etc. who were strong critics of the Christian faith and there will be a harvest of sorrows for the individual child as well as their families, churches and nations as being seen in today's world that seems out of control.

**It really takes a godly and Bible-believing parent to raise children in Biblical pattern.**

**Let us pray.**





**MEN: PILLARS OF THE GATE****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the divine roles of man as a leader.
2. To know how to operate in the same role.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Luke 12:48**

*But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15****❑ INTRODUCTION**

A system designed without security is a failure ab-initio. God created the heavens and the earth, and He puts “man” (humans) to dominate, coordinate, take charge and set things in order on earth – Psalm 115:16. In God’s wisdom, He divided the work between Adam and Eve. Eve was to support Adam in what he does and keep him company. It is irresponsible and wasteful neglect to evade a task, just to reassign it to another not meant for it. This is because we all carry varying degrees of grace for our races – Romans 12:6.

**LESSON OUTLINE**

1. The Making of Men as Pillars of the Gate

**1. The Making of Men as Pillars of the Gate**

a. **He is the head of the family – Ephesians 5:23.** Single or married, the man makes decisions for the members to follow. It is structurally abnormal for the leg to dictate its movement to the head! [If man is not subject to Christ, being born again, such a family system is heading for the rock! 1 Corinthians 11:3.](#) Note the triune order of headship over the family – God, Jesus, and man. May our men demonstrate the grace for headship in the homes. Amen.

b. **He is the propagator of God’s covenant in the home – Genesis 17:7, 10.** As pillars in the family and society, God has established His covenant of possession and domination with man. [Male circumcision is man’s part of God’s covenant of leadership for man as a leader. This divine order cannot be interchanged.](#) Recall God’s promise to David – 1 Kings 8:25.

c. **He is the explorer – Proverbs 18:22 (NKJV).** His quest for a wife, a good one for that, is scripturally backed up by favour from the Lord. This means that man is the explorer of God’s

favour for society. Where God's favour is, His mercy and grace will fortify the success therein. **1 Timothy 5:8** (cf. KJV, NIV and GNT) refers more to a man gender than the female gender in the exploration demands for the home. May the favour of God grace every labour of our hands for increase. Amen. Many have houses without homes; it is a choice!

- d. **He is to be assisted – Genesis 2:18,20, 22.** This means the man finds, feeds, and defends his family and the society he finds himself. His divine assistance, the suitable (right) helper, the woman, plays her supportive role in the relationship. However, when Adam turned the table around, the entire man's gender was cursed – Genesis 3:17-19. When a man neglects his duty, brave women step in. This was not so from the beginning!
- e. **He is the watchman – 2 Chronicles 35:15.** As the backbone of the home and the society, he cannot afford to be absent on duty. A non-resident father figure in a society will produce weak and immature leaders – Ecclesiastes 10:16-17. This is why the Scriptures will always refer to the watchman and not the watchwoman! Watchmen engage in strict sentry, surveillance, and safety for society. **Romans 12:11** – *'Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord'*.

#### ❑ CONCLUSION

Fear God and remind yourself of the good report that is expected of you as a man. May our men be fortified by the grace to perform excellently. I pray that the pillars of our gates will not become the dung of the fields. When our men step out in duty, may the goodness of God and His approval be on their work. Our family shall not fail. Men will not become boys in their assignments. God's riches, and grace, on them will not be frustrated. Amen.

**Let us pray.**



**PURE, PRACTICAL RELIGION****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To highlight some of the reasons why a Christian should do good and show charitable deeds.
2. To exemplify pure and practical characters of Christian living through the lens of the scriptures.
3. To encourage brethren to show practical virtues that point sinners to Jesus Christ.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – James 1:27**

*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGES – Luke 10:25-37, Acts 9:36-42, James 1:22-27****❏ INTRODUCTION**

The book of Luke 10:25-37 shines the spotlight on the selfless act of kindness. Our Lord Jesus Christ has laid a perfect standard for Christian living. He admonishes us to show love to our enemies (Matthew 5:43-46). Ordinarily, the Samaritan in our Bible passage should not be showing mercy to a total stranger. Like the Levite (religious leader), he should have abandoned the brutalized traveller to his fate. However, he chose to do good. A Christian is the bastion of good works and morals. We are meant to shine the light of God to a dark, lonely and degenerated world. God vouched for David's character and says that he is a man after His heart. This is because David had the opportunity kill his sworn enemy, Saul but chose not to do so (1 Samuel 26:9-11). For children of God, all our battles belong to God and He remains our Fighter (1 Samuel 17:47, 2 Chronicles 20:15, Exodus 14: 14).

We are peacemakers and trouble shooters; we are not caterpillars and rabble-rousers. Love is the central theme of the cross. Even when Jesus was strung on the cross by two thieves and given inhuman treatments, He still prayed for His tormentors (Luke 23:34). You cannot claim to love God whom you haven't seen when you don't love your neighbour that you can see (1 John 4:20).

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Driving home the message of Christ beyond mere words
2. Christianity trumps Religion

**1. Driving home the message of Christ beyond mere words**

The central theme of the message of the cross is redemption and peace. God so loved a doomed and damned world. The effect? He demonstrated His love by throwing Jesus Christ into the gallows of death. Therefore, if you claim to be like the model of your Christian faith, you should die 'daily' to self (1 Corinthians 15:31). Galatians 2:20 is also a solemn call for us to die to self. If you say you love your neighbour, prove it. If you profess to care for humanity, demonstrate it as done by

Dorcas (Acts 9: 36-42). It was this kind of selfless and practical act that inspired the people of Antioch to classify the early followers of Christ (Acts 11:26). We must rise above ethnic, religious and tribal differences. We should aim to love everyone, regardless of these parameters. Jesus Christ, our real model, dines with supposed sinners and socializes with the downtrodden of the society (Matthew 9:10-13).

Jesus encourages us to help the helpless regardless of their class, tribe, race, colour and tongue. He told the diminutive Zacchaeus, who huddled on the Sycamore tree just to catch a glimpse of Him to come down. He dined with both the rich and poor. Our character should make people want to serve the God we serve and not otherwise (Matthew 5:13-14). Here, the Bible uses the Light and Salt metaphor to show that Christians should be an indispensable representative of Christ in the world. Let people vouch for you. Do charitable deeds that will lift people. Let others see Jesus in you.

## **2. Christianity trumps Religion**

While our Lord Jesus Christ is not opposed to Religion, He demands from us a more profound level of intimacy. For Him, the physical church structure is good, but the true temple of God is your body (Romans 12:1). Religion preaches church denomination but Christianity leads a sinner first to Christ. Religion condemns but Christianity leaves judgement to God (Matthew 7:1-5). **It is so easy to be overwhelmed, or to judge and therefore to refrain from helping others.**

Someone said, and rightly too, that while Religion is man's attempt to God on God's terms, Christianity is God's attempt to get man on man's terms. At the heart of religion lies hypocrisy, fear, ritual, deceit and other self-serving terms. Conversely, at the heart of Christianity lies love, empathy, intercession, redemption story and sincere sacrifice. Going by religious tenets, the adulterous woman was supposed to be stoned to death. However, Jesus Christ overturned the verdict (John 8: 1-11). Jesus demonstrates the teaching of turning the other cheek when He gave himself up for crucifixion. Therefore, we should be good ambassadors of Christ in manners and action (1 Timothy 4: 12).

## **❑ CONCLUSION**

The most important aspect of Christ's teaching is captured in love. He says that 'Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy' (Matthew 5:7). Also, in Matthew 25: 34-40, Jesus encourages us to go over and beyond to help the needy.

**Pure, practical religion demonstrates our true faith. It responds to the needs of others, according to James (1:22-27). May our hearts be moved from inaction to action, from words alone to deeds that back them up. Compassionate action not only aids those mired in life's difficulties, but it may also make them open to the greater message from our Saviour who sees their need and can do much more for them.**

Whatever we do, we should let the love of God lead the way. **Others will know what the words "God is love" mean when they see it in our lives.**

Remember, every work shall be brought to judgement on the last day. Let us therefore show love to our fellow human beings. Let us move from being religious to being christianly.

May the Lord help us to lift our eyes above our own thoughts and circumstances, and truly care as He cares. Amen.

**Let us pray.**

**BOOK STUDY (JONAH)****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To learn destiny-determined lessons from Jonah.
2. To understand God's will for any man not to perish, but rather all men should come to repentance.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Jonah 2:1**

*Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGES – Jonah 1:1-17, 2:1-10, 3:1-10, 4:1-11****□ INTRODUCTION**

Jonah, the son of Amittai, was a native of Galilee, and one of the earlier prophets. 2 Kings 14:25. He was called to go as a missionary to Nineveh, but went with great reluctance. Although he was chastised for his disobedience, he repented, and eventually obeyed the Lord's instruction. The people of Nineveh repented at his message and were saved.

Jesus Christ vouched for this truth in the Book of Jonah as seen in Matthew 12:39-41, 16:4, Luke 11:29.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. The Character of Jonah, the Reluctant Missionary
2. The Endurance of God's Mercy for All
3. Spiritual Lessons for Today's Christians

**1. The Character of Jonah, the Reluctant Missionary**

-Self-willed. Jonah 1:1-3.

-Godly. Jonah 1:9.

-Courageous. Jonah 1:12.

-Prayerful. Jonah 2:1-9.

-Selfish. He felt disappointed when the people of Nineveh repented. Jonah 3:4-10, 4:1.

- Was too much concerned for his own reputation. Jonah 4:2-3.

## 2. The Endurance of God's Mercy for All

The Bible says: 'God's mercies endureth for ever'. The enduring mercies of God manifest here in that:

- In spite of Jonah running away from God's duty, he still found God's presence in the depths of the sea. Psalm 139:10, Jonah 2:1-10. This shows the omnipotence, the omniscience and the omnipresence of the Almighty God.
- God delivered Jonah when he cried out to him.
- Although it was an idolatrous nation, the people of Nineveh still got saved. 2 Peter 3:9. There is salvation for everyone who repents.

## 3. Spiritual Lessons for Today's Christians

- There is danger in running away from divine duty. Jonah 1:3: '**Jonah went down.....**' All those who had ever sought to flee from the presence of God always went down. Samson too went down. Judges 14:1.
- God overtook Jonah in his flight. Jonah 1:4-17.
- Even when God is chastising us, we must go ahead to still obey His instructions.
- God employs imperfect men as channels of truth.
- God's love remains wide and deep even in our being rebuked by Him. Jonah 4:4-11.
- God loves all souls and desires their salvation. 2 Peter 3:9.
- Delay is very dangerous. We must therefore not delay in responding to God's demand to go and preach the gospel to all nations. Ezekiel 22:30.
- True repentance is godly sorrow for sin, which is perfect hatred for sin. 2 Corinthians 7:9-10.
- We are watchmen over all souls, and would therefore be accountable unto God. If the Ninevites had perished, it is not impossible that God would have asked of their blood from Jonah. Ezekiel 3:16-19.
- We must not be self-willed and selfish in our relationship with God. Selfishness comes in when: (a) God's burden (for men's perishing souls) is not our burden, (b) when we can sacrifice time to attend special programs (including night vigils), pray only for ourselves and yet have no time for evangelism and (c) when the church programmes and messages centre on prosperity alone, and no time is given for outreaches that would save souls.

### ❑ CONCLUSION

The book of Jonah portrays a prophet who is godly, yet selfish, and fails to recognize that God's love is for all men no matter their spiritual condition. Despite the fact that Nineveh was an idolatrous city, God still loved its people. How we need to realize that the souls of ungodly people (herbalists, idol worshippers, armed robbers, cultic people, immoral men

and women, drug addicts, alcoholics, etc) still matter to God who is their Creator, and as people who have seen the light, we must strive to save their souls.

**Let us pray.**



**FREEDOM FROM FINANCIAL BONDAGE****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To know the nitty-gritty of prosperity and prodigality in pursuit of financial freedom.
2. To understand the concepts of prosperity and prodigality from the lens of the scriptures.
3. To enumerate some scriptural principles to attaining freedom from financial bondage.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Philippians 4:19**

*But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Matthew 25:14-30****□ INTRODUCTION**

The word of God (The Holy Bible) is a rich compendium of universal truths. It is the source of all economic, psychological, political, and social laws (Isaiah 48:17; Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 40:12-18; Psalm 19:2; Philippians 4:9; Daniel 1:17). It is also interesting that some Christians play out the story of the prodigal son as eloquently told by our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 15:13-14). In the same breath, we can attest to being beneficiaries of the Abrahamic blessings (Genesis 12:1-3, 17: 5-7).

It is clear that God has endowed everyone with blessings to prosper with. We can either choose to prosper with it or be wasteful. All we have to do is ask God to open our eyes to the amazing opportunities around us. Moses thinks that what he is holding is a rod until God used it for signs and wonders (Exodus 4: 1-5). The big question is: What is in your hand? Prosperity is all-encompassing. Money is just one aspect of prosperity. Wealth without genuine repentance or salvation experience is useless (Matthew 19: 16-23). Jesus is the source of financial liberty. Everything we will ever become and achieve resides in Him (John 15:5).

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Living a prosperous christian life
2. Overcoming prodigal tendencies
3. Freedom from financial bondage

**1. Living a prosperous christian life**

The best way to understand prosperity is from the life of Joseph in Potiphar's house (Genesis 39: 3-5). The key component in Joseph's prosperous life style is that God is the source and base of his life. Prosperity is empty without God's blessings (Deuteronomy 8: 18). Whatever the devil gives his subjects is temporary and a bait (John 10:10). Think about the wealthiest and richest business persons in the world today; except they acknowledge God and trust Him for their continued



progress, the money will tantamount to nothing (Matthew 19: 22-24). There is nothing that we have that is not given from above. We are Landlords and not tenants (Psalm 24:1). Every christian should be a carrier of God's glory.

Some nuggets to living a prosperous christian life:

- I. **Put God first** (Matthew 6:33): God's instruction to Joshua (Joshua 1:8) as it is to us today is very clear. God desires that we prosper. Hence, He demands total obedience from us. A lot of believers wallow in poverty today due to anxiety and not putting God first. The Holy Spirit is the giver of light and our pathway to riches unknown.
- II. **Diligence** (Proverbs 22:29): God does not reward slothfulness and sloppiness. He honours the labour of our enterprise and ingenuity. A christian will be perpetually poor if he or she does not apply themselves to the knowledge and expertise their profession requires.
- III. **Gratitude** (Psalm 103:2): A life that does not appreciate inevitably depreciates. The reason some of us are living in poverty is because we are self-serving and unthankful. Jesus healed ten lepers but only one of them returned to give God the glory. We must imbibe the habit of showing gratitude to God and our benefactors. When we appreciate and show gratitude to God and people, we are almost assure of another round of goodies.
- IV. **Tithes and Offerings** (Malachi 3: 8-10): God honours His word in the life of christians who pay their tithes and offerings. Nothing makes prosperity become out of our reach than avoidance to paying tithe, offering and first fruit. We cannot rob God and expect to be prosperous.
- V. **Constant warfare against demonic incursion into our finances** (Ephesians 6: 12-13): We live in a world that lies in wickedness. For example, when a wage (or salary) earner is putting his or her earnings into a bag with holes (Haggai 1:6). Therefore, we should always watch and pray. We must constantly engage in spiritual warfare to ward off satanic attack on our incomes/profits, businesses and career paths. Every physical manifestation is the result of a spiritual construct. Leave no room for the devil.
- VI. **Prudence** (Proverbs 8:12). To become prosperous, christians must show sagacity or shrewdness in the management of their financial affairs.

## 2. **Overcoming prodigal tendencies** (Luke 15:13-14)

Most times, we take the grace of God for granted by allowing our flesh to determine our reaction to issues. Abraham and Sarah typify this (Genesis 16:1-5). Although He is a loving Father, sometimes, He makes us face the consequences of our inactions. Every opportunity given by God should be exploited by the leading of the Holy Spirit. Don't be a time waster. Cherish relationships and maximize your resources.

## 3. **Freedom from financial bondage** (Luke 8:11-15)

Most christians crave the best things in life but are not ready to pay the sacrifices necessary to get there. The parable of the sower typifies why we sometimes live in scarcity despite being full of potentials. Until we live in abundance that God desires for us (3 John 1:2), we will remain under the strict rulership (bondage, so to say) of the rich and at the mercy of our creditors (Proverbs 22:7).

However, we waste the grace and endowment of God in our lives by not allowing His word to germinate. We do not acknowledge Him all our way. And we lean on our own understanding.

## ❑ CONCLUSION

As heaven-bound children of God, we must understand that the devil will work against our lifting and prosperity. Remember that he is like a roaring lion, going about, looking for whom he will devour. Hence, we must be on guard and trust God for our prosperity. Avoid short cuts to becoming rich so that you will not be cut short.

**Let us pray.**

**LIVING IN THE SPIRIT****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To know that we should always portray Christ at all times.
2. To understand that we are the Word of God (epistles) known and read of all men in the world.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Philippians 4:8**

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Philippians 4:5-9****❑ INTRODUCTION**

Living in the Spirit is gradually becoming an old school affair but God's standards are static and sure. 2 Timothy 2:19a. We are expected to display Christ in all ramifications excluding nothing just like the disciples of old (Acts 11:26). The scriptures therefore admonished us to **“remove not the ancient landmark which thy (our) fathers have set” (Proverbs 22:28).**

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Attributes of a christian lifestyle
2. How to live in the Spirit

**1. Attributes of a christian lifestyle**

A christian lifestyle is a deliberate effort put in place to be like Jesus Christ without any form of pretensions. Matthew 23:14. It is beyond eye service or activities to prove a point. Colossians 3:22.

A Christian lifestyle means:

- Putting off the old man or adamic nature. Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9.
- Continuous cleansing of self through the word of God. John 17:17.
- Daily renewal of mind. Romans 12:1-2, that is, not allowing sin to gain ground in our hearts (Romans 6:12-13, James 1:15).
- Guarding against situations that breed or lure one to sin. Colossians 3:3-5, 8-9, Romans 8:13.
- Consciously, consistently and concisely purging of self. 2 Corinthians 7:1.
- making our word our bond. 2 Corinthians 1:18.

**2. How to live in the Spirit**

To live in the Spirit requires shunning carnality in totality after deciding to live a life of Christ. Romans 13:14, Galatians 2:20.

## **How do you know a man who lives in the Spirit?**

-He lives with eternity in view. Philippians 3:14-15. It is expected that a Spirit-filled believer knows that his time here is short. John 8:23, 18:36. A spiritual man's destination is to be with Jesus. John 14:3.

-Men of the spirit are never seen as being wise (1 Corinthians 3:18-19). They are regarded as being foolish because they never conform to the standards of this world (Romans 12:2) but their testimonies are sure at the end. 2 Corinthians 1:12.

-All his affections and pursuits are things of heaven. Colossians 3:1-2.

-A man of the spirit pleases God and not men. Ephesians 6:6. Pleasing God is the ultimate desire of a man of the Spirit because it determines how far he or she will go. Philippians 1:18.

-He dies daily. 1 Corinthians 15:31. How? By dropping little sins that easily besets (Hebrews 12:1), through constant self-examinations (2 Corinthians 13:5, Psalm 139:23-24). **'For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged' (1 Corinthians 11:31).**

### **❑ CONCLUSION**

The earnest desire and expectation of God is that His children align with Him in all sincerity without being indifferent to His (that is God's) own lifestyle. God is a Spirit, and we, while still on earth, are to live in the Spirit by being spiritually minded if we would not want Him to 'spew us out of His mouth' (Revelation 3:16). **'For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace' (Romans 8:6).**

**Let us pray.**

**IN HIS PRESENCE – Part 1****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To have understanding of Omnipresent power of the Almighty God.
2. To expose God's closeness and His perfect knowledge of all His creatures especially man.
3. To realize God's desire to fellowship with man always.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Psalm 16:11**

*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Psalm 139:7-16****□ INTRODUCTION**

No one has ever seen God physically and live (Exodus 33:20, John 1:18a) but as His children, we have the privilege to fellowship with Him. His presence can be felt, His awe can be perceived and His glory can be seen. The pillar of cloud by day and that of fire by night represented His glory and His presence during the Israelites' journey (Exodus 13:21). His presence is in all places of His dominion simultaneously. There is therefore no hiding place from His presence which is one of the attributes that makes Him the ALMIGHTY GOD.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. His Presence
2. In His Presence

**1. His Presence**

-His presence is God's ability to be present and dwell with men.

-His presence is the manifestation or expression of His power, might, glory, light, beauty, splendour, awe and majesty to human beings and other creatures. Indeed, the earth and the heavens do shake at the presence of God (Psalm 68:8).

-God's presence can be a place or moment where or when the power and the Spirit of God are evidently at work around us. Individuals can also be filled with God's presence.

-In the Old Testament, God's presence was identified by movable ark of covenant either in the tabernacle or to the battle front (Exodus 25:8, 21-22), at the crossing of Jordan (Joshua 3: 6, 8-10) and at the battle of Philistines against Israelites (1Samuel 4:5-8).

-In the New Testament, our heart is the tabernacle that houses the presence of God through the Holy Spirit (John 14:23, Hebrews 8:10), for He does not dwell in a house built with hands of men (Acts 17:24).

-His presence can manifest either as a loving and merciful God or as a mighty terrible God and consuming fire (Psalm 18:25-26, Hebrews 12:29).

## 2. In His Presence

- Fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore, joy unspeakable, angels' praises and unending worship of His majesty. Psalm 16:11, 1 Peter 1:8, Revelation 7:11-12.
- His presence is full of light unapproachable. John 1:5, 1 Timothy 6:16.
- His presence is filled with power, awe and terrific. Exodus 24:17, Psalm 114:1-8.
- His presence is filled with inexplicable glory, beauty, splendour and majesty. 1 Chronicles 16:27 and 2 Chronicles 7:1-3.
- Destruction of enemies and the wicked. Psalms 9:3, 68:2.
- Revelations and mysteries are accessible in His presence. Revelation 4:1.
- God's presence calls for continual repentance, purging from sin and time of refreshing. Joshua 7:10-12, Acts 3:19.
- Confidence of relationship, peace, security and hope. Psalm 16:8.
- His presence is filled with sweet and awesome experience that cannot be resisted but longing for more of it. For example, Jacob in Genesis 28:15-17, also Peter, James and John at the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-4.
- Being in His presence is a grace that brings heavenly consciousness. Philippians 3:20.
- All true children of God are carriers of His presence. That was why Elijah's command (in 1 Kings 17:1, 7; James 5:17) that there should be neither rain nor dew for more than three years came to pass.

### CONCLUSION

Being in His loving presence can be a sweet inexplicable experience, and to appear before the wrath of the consuming fire is a terrible experience one might not live to tell. The Lord is in the Holy Temple (even your body), so let everyone keep silent.

**Watch what you do in His presence!**

### Next week

We shall continue this topic by seeing how man can come into the presence of God and vice versa.

**Let us pray.**

**IN HIS PRESENCE – Part 2****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To have understanding of Omnipresent power of the Almighty God.
2. To expose God's closeness and His perfect knowledge of all His creatures especially man.
3. To realize God's desire to fellowship with man always.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Psalm 16:11**

*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: **in thy presence** is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGES – Psalm 24:3-6, Jeremiah 23:23-24****□ INTRODUCTION**

God is Omnipresent that is, available everywhere in heaven, on earth and underneath the earth. Despite this awesome attribute, He neither makes His presence accessible to all people, nor available in all places. Yet, He is ever present to those who desire Him and that can meet up with conditions of getting to His presence.

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. How can man come to God's Presence?
2. How can God's Presence come to man?

**1. How can man come to God's Presence?**

- Come unto Him with worship (Matthew 6:9), as well as thanksgiving and praises (Psalm 100:4, Psalm 118:19), not with complaints or petitions.
- The eyes of God cannot behold iniquity; eyes of sinners too lack boldness to be lifted up to God. Habakkuk 1:13, Psalm 24:4, Luke 18:13.
  - Clean hands: righteous life. **'Touch not; Handle not' anything that is unclean (2 Corinthians 6:17).**
  - Pure heart: right motives (2 Chronicles 25: 1-2), inward holiness. Only the pure in heart shall see God. Matthew 5: 8.
  - Soul not lifted up to vanity nor sworn deceitfully.
- A heart longing for His presence continually. Psalm 42:1-2, Proverbs 8:17.
- By studying and meditating His word to draw us closer to Him. Joshua 1:8, James 4:8.
- Place of prayer and service brings us to His presence. Acts 4:31.
- God manifests His presence among brethren who are in one accord and unity, not in confusion or commotion. Acts 2:1.
- In a place where His name is established in righteousness and holiness. Deuteronomy 12:5.
- God is present where two or more are gathered together in His name. Matthew 18:20.

- Spending quality time in His presence imparts more of His nature on us to carry His presence. 2 Corinthians 3:18.
- The proud or haughty in spirit cannot come into His presence. Psalm 138:6.

### **1. How can God's Presence come to man?**

- In praises, worship and thanksgiving. 2 Chronicles 5:13-14, Psalm 22:3.
- In holiness and righteousness. Hebrews 12:14.
- With singleness of heart. Acts 1:14-15, 2:46.
- State of the heart- when you seek or think of heavenly things always. Colossians 3:1-2, Matthew 6:21, Acts 17:27.
- Consistent meditation and studying the word of God. The more you abide in His presence, the more of His presence you carry. John 15:5.
- When the spirit of God becomes more powerfully active especially in a gathering of the saints. Acts 2:1-4.
- God's presence will not manifest in a spiritually polluted and confused atmosphere. Joshua 7:12b, 1 Corinthians 14:33.

### **□ CONCLUSION**

The presence of God is one sweet, glorious spiritual ambience every serious child of God should desire. This is because there are treasures of fullness of joy and liberty, among others, to enjoy in His presence (Psalm 16:11, 2 Corinthians 3:17).

Right from the beginning, God desired to have man in His presence and make Himself available to man in constant fellowship. Holy and righteous living is the pathway to His presence (Psalm 118:19).

**Let us pray.**



## ALL ABOUT CHRISTIAN GIVING

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the facts and principles of Christian giving.
2. To know offerings that are acceptable and unacceptable to God.
3. To know the rewards of acceptable offerings.

## KEY SCRIPTURE – Luke 6:38

*Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. KJV*

## BIBLE PASSAGES – 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, Malachi 3:8-12

## ❑ INTRODUCTION

Giving is a divine instruction from God. It is really an outward expression of your inner commitments and love towards God. A man not committed to God or who does not love God cannot give to Him.

Giving involves dying to self, which is dying to the flesh. A man alive to the flesh cannot give because the flesh will always give reasons why he should not give. **The moment death (to self) takes place, giving begins. This is because a dead person surrenders all.**

This makes it an obligation for all believers. Giving in all ramifications strengthens the body of Christ and help to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ. Giving is not only monetary; we can give God other things like our time, resources and talents after we must have giving our life to Him which is the first thing to do.

Since giving is an instruction from God, failure to give is a total disobedience. Biblically, there are different types of giving.

- a) **Tithe:** This is ten percent of your income. Leviticus 27:30. Jacob said: 'And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: **and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee**' (Genesis 28:22). As a Christian who earns salary or wages, you are to give a **tenth (ten percent) of your income**. As a trader or business person, tithe payment is mandatory on profit you make from every transaction (Deuteronomy 12:17, 2 Corinthians 31:5-6). If we want to lay claim to Abraham's blessings, we must also do what Abraham did. Abraham paid tithes (Genesis 14:20).
- b) **Offerings:** This refers to freewill offerings (Deuteronomy 16:10, Ezra 8:28). It has no specific amount; it has to do with what you decide to give. Psalm 54:6a.
- c) **Firstfruits:** This is done once in a year, or as you receive new blessings in the course of the year. Proverbs 3:9.
- d) **Sacrificial giving:** This is done under God's divine instructions. It usually requires a huge amount of money or asset. 2 Samuel 6:13, 2 Chronicles 5:6.

- e) **Giving to the poor and needy.** Deuteronomy 15:10-11, Proverbs 19:17; 28:27, Matthew 6:1-4.
- f) **Giving to special projects and programs.** Examples of such projects and programs are: Crusades, Purchase of Buses for outreaches, Procurement of instruments, Conventions, Building projects, Fountain of Hosanna Church of Christ's 'The Gates of hell shall not prevail' which holds annually, etc.
- g) **Giving to your Pastors who feed you with the spiritual food.** Luke 8:2-3, 1 Corinthians 9:11.

## LESSON OUTLINES

1. Principles for Christian giving
2. Reward of acceptable giving

### 1. Principles for Christian giving

An offering is a gift to God which attracts eternal reward. Not all giving are acceptable. For us to give an offering that is acceptable to God, we must know the principles or the truths about Christian giving so that we can be guided aright whenever we want to give. The principles of Christian giving are:

- a) Give God the first and the best. **He deserves nothing less, nothing else.** Malachi 1:6-8, 1 Kings 8:5.
- b) Giving to God must be done cheerfully, generously, lovingly, purposefully and thankfully (2 Corinthians 9:7). **So do not give more than you can give cheerfully.**
- c) You must give your offering where your spirit is fed.
- d) Give with the right motive or intention. 2 Chronicles 25:2.
- e) Have faith in the giving. Hebrews 11:1.
- f) Do not give grudgingly or of necessity (2 Corinthians 9:7). **Therefore, do not give if you do not want to give.**
- g) Because the more you give, the more you receive and the more you are blessed, give with an expectation. 2 Corinthians 9:6, Galatians 6:7, Acts 20:35.
- h) Give regularly and systematically. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.
- i) Give secretly. Matthew 6:1-4.
- j) Give with a pure heart. Matthew 5:23-24.
- k) You must be faithful. Ten percent (as tithe) should never be less.
- l) God does not accept the offerings of sinners. Genesis 4:3, 5.
- m) God wants us to ask for a blessing when we give to Him especially when we give our tithe. Deuteronomy 26:12-13, 15.
- n) Tithes and offerings may be handed over to true pastors (as Levites or priests of old in the scriptures). Numbers 18:21, 24.

### 2. Reward of acceptable giving

- a) When you give, it increases your faith and trust in God.

- b) You are storing up your treasures in heaven. Matthew 6:20.
- c) It opens doors of financial breakthrough. Malachi 3:10.
- d) It rebukes spiritual and physical devourer which can come in form of sicknesses, diseases, physical robbery and an unexplained loss of valuables. Malachi 3:11.
- e) God will trust you with His treasures because He knows that you will use it according to His will.
- f) You will be a beneficiary of Abraham's blessings. Genesis 12:3; 22:17-18; 28:4, Galatians 3:14.

#### **❑ CONCLUSION**

Giving is an act of love. No one can claim to love without giving. God first proved his love to us by giving us His most treasured possession which is our Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:16. This show of love is what we can never repay because our redemption by Christ is priceless. This means that we can never enrich God with our giving because He owns the cattle upon a thousand hills and all that is in heaven and earth belongs to Him (Psalms 50:10; 24:1). What then can be too much to give to this God?

**Let us pray.**







## PSALM 23 – PART 1

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand God's multi-dimensional care for us.
2. To learn how to trust in God by faith.

## KEY SCRIPTURE – Psalm 23:6

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. KJV*

## BIBLE PASSAGE – Psalm 23:1-6

## □ INTRODUCTION

David's previous experience as a Shepherd boy helped him to compose this psalm. He understood the helplessness and dependence of the sheep on the shepherd. We are the people and sheep of God's pasture – Psalms 95:7; 100:3. The more we look to God for sustenance and support, the more we prove to God that we trust in Him. **Jehovah Nissi** can care for all we want and need. His riches are inexhaustible by all human races. **Let us fully trust in the unsearchable riches (Ephesians 3:8), exceeding riches (Ephesians 2:7), greater riches (Hebrews 11:26), all riches (Colossians 2:2), deep riches (Romans 11:33); hidden riches (Isaiah 54:3) that God has for us.** How can our God with these infinite riches in all thinkable dimensions fail or fall short of good supply to us?

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. David's impression of God's ability

**1. David's impression of God's ability****a. The LORD – Our Possessor – verse 1**

We are the sheep of His pasture, and The LORD, therefore, is our Shepherd. He provides for all we need – physically and spiritually. He knows what we require at every point and can make the supply possible. Nothing is impossible for Him to do to make us comfortable. Worship and praise to God If God is our Shepherd, why do we look for another? HE who owns us can keep us under His care. Amen.

**b. The LORD – Our Pilot – verses 2 and 3**

Success has a defined route. Only one way leads to the pastureland of our lives. The LORD knows the way because He is the WAY. Quit jumping from road to road and discover the ONLY WAY with God. If we allow Him to pilot or guide us, HE will do these –

- **Lie** us down in restful, fresh, and green pastures. Peace for our souls. Isaiah 26:3.
- **Lead** us to peaceful streams of water – no struggles and worries in all things. Proverbs 1:33.
- **Lighten** us with fresh visions to succeed as He shows us His mercy. Micah 7:8-9.
- **Lay** the paths of His righteousness before us so that we please Him in all we do. His pathways are found in His Word by revelation (Psalm 143:8-10) because of His name.

All we need to do is follow Him. He knows the WAY. Don't wander away!

**c. The LORD – Our Protector – verse 4**

As humans, when we stray from God's way, we find ourselves in strange and scary places. We left God. But He did not leave us, because of His love for us. Matthew 18:12-13. On such wayward paths, we experience the dark and harrowing side of life. It is the shadow of death and death! Then God shows up to bring us again into the Light. **Psalm 112:4** *'Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous'*. The LORD will do this because He is the Shield and Defender of His people. Read Psalm 37:23.

There are superabundant provisions from God for as many who will give God the only place in their hearts. If He is not the Lord of ALL of that is with you, then He is the Lord of NONE with you.

**☐ Next week**

We shall conclude this topic by examining more of David's impression of the ability of God. Make sure you attend. God bless you.

**Let us pray.**



## PSALM 23 – PART 2

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand God's multi-dimensional care for us.
2. To learn how to trust in God by faith.

## KEY SCRIPTURE – Psalm 23:6

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. KJV*

## BIBLE PASSAGE – Psalm 23:1-6

## □ INTRODUCTION

God's omnipotence can do all things – way in the sea, pathway in the thick forest, light in the darkest valley and rivers in the desert. If the Lord is your Shepherd, don't become a goat. A goat is far from the rich blessings of God and has no inheritance of peace and success in God. Don't just give God all that you have, give Him all that you are.

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. David's more impression of God's ability

1. David's more impression of God's ability

- d. *The LORD – Our Provider – verse 5*

**1 Chronicles 29:11** – *'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all'.*

While our enemies think all is gone and done about us, our Saviour Lord richly renews and restores us. Consider how Jehovah God restores us to the place of honour after He finds us.

- **The announcement.** Our enemies are called to our divinely furnished table as spectators – Psalm 86:17. God furnishes our table in the wilderness and will feed us in the promised land.
- **The anointing.** The anointed one is the appointed one – Romans 8:30 (Mark 1:10-11). The Lord is the lifter of our heads above the enemies – Psalm 45:7. This is the seal of God's approval.
- **The abundance.** A running-over cup means a more-than-enough supply (not to waste) that exceeds our expectations. Recall the extra 12 baskets of leftover bread and fish (Mark 6:43).

Our trust in God is the springboard for the inexplicable outpouring of blessings from the storehouses of God. If you face limitations in your supply, don't limit God. Our God gives to all creatures and supplies their needs. **Jeremiah 32:27** "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?" NKJV.

**e. The LORD – Our Preserver – verse 6**

Each time we recite this Scripture, we confess and declare the Almighty God as our Preserver. God's mercy is everlasting – Psalm 100:5. When God shows His mercy to a man, favour and grace will be there to showcase the man before men. David realised that without God's mercies, he would have been forgotten in the fields with the animals. Dwelling in the house of the Lord does not translate into living within the walls of the church building. It means becoming the tabernacle of God everywhere we go. **1 Peter 2:5** – "*you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*". NKJV.

**□ CONCLUSION**

These were the deep insights David had about God, from the perspective of a Shepherd. How do you see God? How much of Him do you know? Has He shown you His mercy before? What can you declare about God's faithfulness around you? Records testify of the greatness of God. Won't you declare the same? Your trust in God should not rust. Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, ratify an eternal covenant with His blood; may He equip us with all we need for doing His will. May He produce in us, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to Him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen.

**Let us pray.**

**THE TONGUE OF THE WISE – PART 1****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand how God describes the tongue.
2. To open our eyes to the destructive and constructive power of the tongue.
3. To control and caution the use of our tongues.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Proverbs 12:18**

*There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGES – James 3:1-12, Proverbs 10:19; 15:2****□ INTRODUCTION**

The tongue, a little organ, is considered to be the smallest part of the body. Spiritually, the tongue can be referred to as a two edged sword which can be used to make or break a person.

A lot of importance is placed on the tongue because as little as it is, it is more spiritual than physical. The tongue, when used wisely, can have a positive impact, restore and heal, but the same tongue when used carelessly can cause havoc, destruction and generational curse.

Therefore, believers must be careful of careless and idle talk because **'in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin'** and **'he that refraineth his lips is wise'** (Proverbs 10:19), Matthew 5:22.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Brief description of the tongue
2. How a wise believer should use the tongue

**1. Brief description of the tongue**

- a. The tongue is a little member of the body. James 3:5.
- b. It is a fire. James 3:6.
- c. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. James 3:8.
- d. It is a world of iniquity. James 3:6.
- e. It cannot be tamed by any man. James 3:7-8.
- f. It is an instrument of blessing (God) and cursing (men). James 3: 9-12.

**2. How a wise believer should use the tongue**

- Complement people's clean and godly appearance: this can go a long way to restore confidence in a person with low self-esteem.
- Refrain your tongue from evil and deceit. Psalm 34:13.
- Avoid letting out secrets kept with you in confidence.
- Be quick to hear but hesitate to respond (James 1:19). This prevents you from getting angry and running into troubles. Proverbs 21:23.
- Do not be too quick to judge without hearing from both sides.
- Do not backbite and avoid gossips. Whatever you cannot say in someone's presence, do well not to say it behind the person (Numbers 12:1-2). **If you have to gossip, gossip the gospel.**
- Do not give bad report about others. Use your words to build and not pull down.
- Do not curse (Exodus 22:28). Remember that there is power in your tongue. Proverbs 18:21.
- Do not engage in idle or careless utterances. Matthew 12:36.
- Keep your words few and listen more (James 1:19), try not to always dominate a conversation or voice an opinion. By so doing, you gain more knowledge and understanding. **The amount of words you speak, if care is not taken, is capable of revealing your weakness than your strength.**
- Do not speak words of unbelief. 2 Kings 7:1-2.
- Let your corrections be constructive. Do not condemn. Luke 6:37, John 8:11. **As a spark of fire can set a forest ablaze, so can your tongue bring condemnation to men (James 3:5-8).**
- Do not bear false witness. Do not lie, flatter or exaggerate. Colossians 3:9, Proverbs 29:5, 26:28.
- Do not swear. James 5:12.
- Avoid being 'double-tongued'. 1 Peter 3:8.
- Do not sin, whatsoever, with your tongue. Psalm 39:1.
- Use your tongue to soften hard situations and circumstances. Proverbs 25:15.
- Because we have received grace, we are to show it in the way we speak to others. Ecclesiastes 10:12. Grace in our hearts pours out in our words and deeds. Colossians 3:16-17.

## CONCLUSION

Though the tongue is a little part of the body, it is capable of doing great things. Hence it is impossible to succeed in life without knowing how to use the tongue. The power of life and death is in the tongue. Proverbs 18:21.

## Next Week

We shall be studying the destructive and constructive power of the tongue.

**Let us pray.**

**THE TONGUE OF THE WISE– PART 2****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand how God describes the tongue.
2. To open our eyes to the destructive and constructive power of the tongue.
3. To control and caution the use of our tongues.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Proverbs 12:18**

*There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGES – James 3:1-12, Proverbs 10:19; 15:2****□ INTRODUCTION**

Words are powerful weapons that can inspire or destroy someone. A simple complement on someone can make the person's day and gives hope, while a derogatory word can be suicidal to someone going through an unpleasant situation (for example, depression).

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. The destructive power of the tongue
2. The constructive power of the tongue

**1. The destructive power of the tongue**

The tongue can become destructive if used carelessly in the following ways:

- a. Speaking and prophesying negatively to oneself and to others, for instance, "you are a fool", "I am finished", "Life is frustrating", "This problem will kill me", "I don't think I can make it in this life", "I am dying", "It is tough", etc.
- b. As parents or guardians, cursing or abusing our children or wards. This is so rampant these days and done ignorantly and in annoyance. Meanwhile, some unseen forces of darkness can stamp these curses and they begin to affect generations yet unborn.
- c. As teachers, speaking derogatory words to children in our care. These have long term effects.
- d. To curse. Genesis 9: 24-26. For example: spouses cursing each other. This act can put families into generational bondage.
- e. To tell lies. Genesis 12:13, Acts 5:1-11. Also, people lie against others out of envy or bitterness just to bring them down.
- f. Speaking down on people because they appear to be more successful than you.

g. Placing a curse on people who hurts or offends you. **This is unlike Job. Job 31:30.**

h. Speaking evil and deceit. Psalm 34:13, 1 Peter 3:10.

## **2. The constructive power of the tongue**

a. Constantly confessing the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:11.

b. Praying for people and blessing them. Genesis 9:24-27.

c. Worshipping and singing praises to God always. Psalm 126:2.

d. Preaching, teaching and counselling based on the word of God. Psalm 119:172.

e. Complementing and appreciating people's efforts. Matthew 25:21a.

f. Positive confession to people. Isaiah 3:10, 2 Kings 4:8-26 (Note verses 23 and 26). Also Genesis 24:7, Psalm 118:17.

g. Speaking of God's righteousness at all times. Psalm 35:28.

h. Determining not to sin. Psalm 39:1.

i. Reversing of curse on destiny. 1 Chronicles 4:9-10.

j. Speaking words of hope, faith and encouragement. John 11:23, Genesis 22:8, Acts 27:22.

### **❑ CONCLUSION**

The tongue of the wise is the abode of knowledge and wisdom. We must, therefore, of necessity, use our tongue to build and not destroy.

Before any words will come out of our mouth, we must ask if it will uplift the hearer or hurt him or her. Will it save or destroy? Will it make or mar?

### **❑ Next Week**

We shall conclude this lesson by looking at some ways by which we can control the tongue and helps to cautioning the use of our tongues as individuals.

**Let us pray.**

**THE TONGUE OF THE WISE – PART 3****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand how God describes the tongue.
2. To open our eyes to the destructive and constructive power of the tongue.
3. To control and caution the use of our tongues.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Proverbs 12:18**

*There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGES – James 3:1-12, Proverbs 10:19; 15:2****□ INTRODUCTION**

God created the universe with words, so also we can create the situations we want with the words of our mouth.

As a wise believer, the words that come out of our mouth must be edifying and full of grace. Colossians 4:6.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. How to control the tongue
2. Helps to caution your own tongue

**1. How to control the tongue**

The tongue is used to express the thought of the heart, so the condition of our heart determines what comes out of our mouth. Matthew 12:34. So to control our tongue, we must:

- a. Dedicate our heart, mind and tongue to the Lord daily. **“I (including my tongue) die daily”** (1 Corinthians 15:31b).
- b. Practice speaking words that will encourage, edify, comfort and inspire others. Ephesians 4:29.
- c. Let us always think before we speak. This means that, as wise people, we must be reserved in our talks and reactions or comments on issues. Proverbs 29:11,20.
- d. Ask for the Holy Spirit to be our guide and control our thought always. Proverbs 13:3. The Spirit of God is ever in a wise tongue. 2 Samuel 23:2.
- e. Avoid talking out all personal revelations to people including spouses. For example, Abraham never revealed God’s direct instruction to Sarah (Genesis 22:1-3).

**2. Helps to caution your own tongue**

- a. You must be born again. Edifying words can only be spoken from a regenerated heart. Prov.10: 20.
- b. Consecrate your tongue to the Lord. Psaim141: 3.
- c. Learn to be quiet. Silence can be golden. ***‘The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools’.*** Ecclesiastes 9: 17.
- d. Make positive confessions. Many have been ensnared by the words of their mouth. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. Proverbs 23:7.
- e. Be a good listener. Don’t be in haste to speak or respond to any conversation. James 1: 19.  
**Learn how to hear twice before you speak once. This is the reason why God created us with two ears, one mouth and one tongue.**

#### **❑ CONCLUSION**

Wisdom demands that we control and caution the use of our tongues in order to bring life to ourselves and others around us. Also, “every (idle) word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matthew 12:36) is intended as a caution to us to gain heaven.

May the Lord give us the tongue of the learned and make our tongue wholesome in Jesus name. Amen. Isaiah 50:4, Proverbs 15:4.

**Let us pray.**







**SIGNS OF THE LAST DAYS****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To remind and awaken believers to the imminent second coming of Jesus Christ.
2. To get believers prepared for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Matthew 24:3**

*And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*  
KJV

**BIBLE PASSAGES - Matthew 24:3-25, 2 Timothy 3:1-5****□ INTRODUCTION**

The word of God never leaves us in the dark about the signs that will indicate the latter days.

Last days are perilous and hard times: global economic hardship, inflation, political unrest, insecurity, frequent natural disasters in diverse places, social turmoil and high level of moral corruption. Yet unbelief keeps stretching deeper and the world is not still yielding to God.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Signs of the Last Days
2. What should believers do?

**1. Signs of the Last Days**

- Deception: many will come in the name of Jesus pretending to be Jesus. False Prophets, Pastors, Disciples are out to deceive even the elect with great but fake signs and wonders. Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24, 26.
- Wars and Rumours of wars: It is a time of trouble as nation will rise against nation. Matthew 24:6-7, Haggai 2:22.
- Natural Disasters: famines, pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places. Matthew 24:7.
- Persecution of Christians because of their faith: The gospel will be restricted and persecuted. Matthew 24:9.
- Betrayals, offences, hatred, denials and rejections not only from unbelievers but also among believers. Matthew 24:10, John 15:18, 2Timothy 3:3-4.
- Iniquity shall abound resulting in near-faithlessness, backsliding and apostasy as the love of many believers shall wax cold. In fact, sound biblical teaching will be scarce. Matthew 24:12, 2 Peter 3:3-4.
- Widespread of the gospel and increase in knowledge. Daniel 12:4, Matthew 24:14, 2Timothy3:7.

- Lovers of pleasure and moral corruption at high levels: selfishness, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient, lovers of money, unthankful and unholy. Romans 1: 25-27, 2 Timothy 3:1-5.
- Impostors: Ungodly and pretending to be godly, false teachers pretending to be zealous for truth, yet kicking against the truth. 2 Timothy 3:7-8, 4:3-4.
- Denial of Christ. 1 John 2:18.
- Denial of Christ's return. 2 Peter 3:3-4.

## 2. What should believers do?

- Be fully prepared if you must avoid shame when Jesus Christ returns: Live everyday as if it is the last day, for no one knows the time except God. Matthew 24:36. The truth is that God always gives opportunities to people to hear His word (as you are hearing it again this morning) and time to repent because He is a God of second chance before this great opportunity and time will elapse.
- Watch and Pray. Matthew 24:42, 1Thessalonians 5:6.
- Be steadfast and unmoveable in your faith: **'if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not' (Matthew 24:23).**
- Live practical christian life. Romans 2:13. Ensure you remain true to God and never allow the devil to draw you into a lifestyle of unforgiveness, malice, animosities or grudges.
- Pray for grace and endurance to get to the finishing line. Matthew 24:13, Luke 9:62.
- Do not compromise your faith. Fight the good fight of faith, endure hardness and defend/contend for the faith. 2Timothy 2:3-4, 4:7, Jude 3-4.
- Be conscious of heavenly glory at all times: set your mind on things above. Colossians 3:2.
- Propagate the gospel in readiness for ultimate soul harvesting. John 4:35-36.
- Be expectant of your Saviour. 1John 3:2-3.

## ❑ CONCLUSION

'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief' (in the night). 1Thessalonians 5:4. The signs are already here, they are real and happening live. The world is not getting better; the end of one affliction is the beginning of another and they will keep manifesting until the coming of the Lord. True believers are not to be perturbed because God has promised to preserve His own till the end but we must watch, pray and be prepared all the time.

Brethren, **'behold I have told you before'**. Matthew 24: 25.

**Let us pray.**

**WAIT ON THE LORD – PART 1****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To appreciate God when waiting on Him.
2. To experience the gains of waiting on Him.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Isaiah 40:31**

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Isaiah 40:12-31****□ INTRODUCTION**

There are periods of prayer, but a moment of answer. What we do during such transition periods is wait for the answer. Waiting for God does not mean waiting on God. **So if we cannot wait for God, we don't have any business to wait on Him.**

Waiting for God demands patience that is driven by expectations (Psalm 130:5–6). At this time, hopes and faith become more active in us as we seek answers to our desires and questions. Recall Simeon in Luke 2:25–35, who waited for the birth of Jesus. After our prayers, we wait patiently for God's answer.

However, when we wait on God, we are actively engaged in service to Him (Psalm 134:1). We are ready to respond to His call, like Isaiah in Isaiah 6:8. Just like the service attendants at restaurants or in some public places, they wait on their guests to serve them. You cannot serve God, and men will not serve you. If you wait on God, men will stand up for you. There are instances where we wait for God's answers as a "yes," "no," "wait," or "silence," or in the extremely impatient response from God, He gives us "please yourself" as the answer. Can you prove these answers in the Bible?

**LESSON OUTLINE**

1. Why do we wait on God?

**1. Why do we wait on God?**

*a. **He is the Almighty.*** Only God is Mighty, incomparable in measure, not the mightiest. Men and angels are in ranks, but not God, because nothing compares with Him – the "All-Mighty"

God. **Revelation 1:8** – “*I am ...the Almighty One.*” Nothing is worth more than Him. We serve the God who alone measures the volumes of the waters and the dust of the earth. He knows the span of the heavens (sky-to-sky and atmosphere-to-atmosphere), weighing the hills and mountains. Isaiah 40:12. What a mighty God we serve! **He is El-Shaddai** (God Almighty). Genesis 17:1.

*b. He is All-Knowing (Omniscient)* – Isaiah 40:13-14. Even the unspoken thoughts not considered at heart are spread before Him. *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unfathomable (inscrutable, unsearchable) are His judgments (His decisions)! And how untraceable (mysterious, undiscoverable) are His ways (His methods, His paths)! Romans 11:33.* Human brains are too inconsequential to calculate, determine His paths, or suggest a better option in all His creation. He knows all things and desires to send us on errands as His representatives. This is a privilege we have, to be called by Him when waiting on Him. **He is the Omniscient God** – 1 John 3:20.

*c. He is All-Sufficient* – Isaiah 40:15-17. He alone is God. No one can praise Him half enough because of the greatness of His mercy and glory, far above the heavens. His pleasures are displayed in heaven and on earth. The sacrifices of all the animals cannot match the demands of His worship (Psalm 50:11-12). Yes, He is the God that we are waiting on. The All-sufficient God can provide far more for all we dream of or desire. He is Jehovah-Jireh who has all things and can do all things (Psalm 135:6). **He is Jehovah-Jireh** (The Lord our Supplier or Provider), Genesis 22:14.

*d. He is All-Amazing (Omnipotent)* – Isaiah 40:18-20. The worth of gold is what drives men to search diligently for it. God’s incredible, wonderful, and inexpressible acts from age to age are so great that we are honoured and humbled to be His co-workers. **We should not take this grace to work together with God for granted.** 2 Corinthians 6:1. The All-Amazing God who dried up the seas and killed the firstborns in Egypt to prove His wonders is the One we are waiting on. He is terrible in righteousness (Psalm 65:5), majesty (Job 37:22b), and His acts (Psalm 145:6). It is ridiculous and foolhardy to compare the God of the Universe with His works! **He is Jehovah Nissi** (The Lord our Banner/Miracle) Exodus 17:15.

*e. He is Advocate of the Earth* – Isaiah 40:21-24. God sits on high, beholding the works of men, nations, and all His creation, to make judgements and perform unquestionable acts, both in the heavens and the earth. He defends the helpless, judges the wicked, and punishes the proud to exert His justice everywhere. Beloved, we wait on the Righteous Judge of heaven and earth. **He is our Righteousness** - Jehovah Tzidkenu (Jeremiah 33:16).

*f. He is Accountable* – Isaiah 40:25-26. Men forget, even what they write. The Ancient of Days needs no paper to remember events of the dateless past, the present, or what will happen in future. **Isaiah 40:25** - *To whom then will you liken Me, that I should be equal to him? says the Holy One.* He calls all the stars by name, estimated to be over 200 billion trillion, to be sure that none is missing or lacks support; cf. Psalm 147:4. His unfathomable records contain all the hairs on humans, giving them numbers. **Matthew 10:30** *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* NKJV. God knows the number of hairs and their numbers, also the name of each head. He knows me! Nothing is missing from His ever-accurate records. Yes, He is the One we are waiting on. **He holds all things together** (Colossians 1:16-17). Amen.

*g. He is Above All* – Isaiah 40:25-26. How can you be in penury and lack knowing that your Father owns all things in heaven and earth? (1 Chronicles 29:11-12). Those who complain only complicate their matters, and those who grumble will crumble before Him. **He has not forgotten your case!** He makes all grace abound toward us so that we do not lack anything good (2 Corinthians 9:8). Read Isaiah 40:29. God proves Himself in our situations so that no flesh will share His glory. The depth of His understanding is beyond any human theory, postulation, or law – past finding out – Job 9:1, 10; and Romans 11:33. The Almighty God is above all, and we serve and worship Him on earth and in heaven. **He is the Indefatigable God** (Isaiah 40:28b).

#### **CONCLUSION**

God has shown us in these seven ways why our waiting on Him cannot be in vain. He rewards all who wait on Him and whose hearts do not faint. Stay on your guard and keep your hope in Him alive. God is able.

#### **Next week**

We shall conclude this lesson in the second part.

**Let us pray.**

**WAIT ON THE LORD – PART 2****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To appreciate God when waiting on Him.
2. To experience the gains of waiting on Him.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – Isaiah 40:31**

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Isaiah 40:12-31****□ INTRODUCTION**

We shall discuss the benefits of waiting on the Lord. We serve God not because we are afraid of going to hellfire but because we love God and desire to please Him always. The hope of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus and the joy of being in His presence forever make us develop the “waiting heart” of service and commitment. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out His love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us (Romans 5:5). No one can serve the Lord and remain a servant among men. May we not lose our rewards in service due to impatience and pressures around us. In any capacity that the grace of God has been shown to us as Christians, we should serve, minister, or operate in the same capacity; cf. Romans 12:6–8. Note that “let us wait on our ministering” means “let us serve in our offices.” We shall finish strong in Jesus’ name, amen.

**LESSON OUTLINE**

1. The Gains of Waiting on God

**1. The Gains of Waiting on God**

**Isaiah 40:31-** *But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. NKJV*

- a. **Access to new grace** – renewed strength – verse 31a. The grace of God is for work in the ministry and to help one another finish the race successfully. This joy wells in us because it is rooted in the well of salvation (Isaiah 12:3). Thus, our strength is renewed because we are



in active service to God through men. We are refreshed after each moment or period of service.

- b. **Access to new height** – verse 31b. This is greater commitment through diligence in service. Not slothful in business but actively and fervently serving God. **Luke 16:10**: *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."* Our good stewardship while waiting on God produces more and higher treasures of God in our custody, mounting up with wings like eagles. Only spiritual eagles can manage the true riches of God (Luke 16:11).
- c. **Access to new recovery** – verse 31c. **Psalm 84:7** – *"They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God"*. Jehovah knows our frailty, so He increases our strength so swiftly that we don't even feel we have expended so much. This is grace at work! Elijah could outrun Ahab on the horse after his obedience to God's instructions. "Running" in service is a second level of acceleration. Yet, it receives a divine order of tireless refreshing.
- d. **Access to new hope** – verse 31d. In an obviously hopeless situation, Abraham still hoped in God (Romans 4:18). There is always a justifiable excuse we may give for giving up; hence, God's Word encourages us not to faint (Luke 18:1), if we do, it means our strength is little (Proverbs 24:10). **Habakkuk 2:3** - *For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* NKJV. In our lowest and weakest moments, God's mercies can reach us.

## ❑ CONCLUSION

One of the old gospel hymns sings, "It's not an easy road we are traveling to heaven." We have more than enough heroes of faith in our days and in the Bible to encourage us in our service and commitment to God. Note that they handed the baton for the race to us. They cannot be made perfect without us completing the circle of this only race. We cannot afford to give up or miss our ways and be found on the road! Beloved, let us run this race (wait on God) patiently (Hebrews 11:40–12:2). Finally, brethren, earnestly contend for this faith (Jude 3) with all that is within you so that God's rich deposits in you will not be a regret to Him. Galatians 2:21a; 1 Corinthians 15:10.

**Let us pray.**

**FAITHFULNESS IN STEWARDSHIP – PART 1****LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To define stewardship and what is expected of us as faithful stewards of God.
2. To identify examples of faithful stewards in the Bible.

**KEY SCRIPTURE – I Peter 4: 10**

*As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. KJV*

**BIBLE PASSAGE – Matthew 25: 14-30****❑ INTRODUCTION**

In a layman's term, stewardship means the ability to properly and effectively manage what has been entrusted in one's care. Simply put, it is managing and caring for what belongs to someone else.

As believers, we must understand that there is nothing we own both physically and spiritually that originally belongs to us. They are all gifts from God and we will definitely give account of how we use them on the last day which is the judgment day.

According to Genesis 1:28, the earth (and all of creation) was given to us by God to manage. These include: our intellect, resources, skills and abilities. Stewardship involves responsibility and accountability, meaning that we are solely responsible for what God has entrusted in our care. This is because stewardship involves using our God given dominion over His creation.

To be a good steward of God therefore, include the responsible use of our time, talents and treasures to the glory of God.

**LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Principles of Stewardship
2. For what am I responsible for and will give account of?
3. Some examples of faithful stewards in the Bible

**1. Principles of Stewardship.**

The word 'principle' means fundamental truth. There are four basic principles of stewardship that we must know. They are:

**-The Principle of Ownership.** According to Psalm 24:1: 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein'.

God owns and creates everything. In other word, He is the real owner of all of us in the world. Psalm 50:12. He only put us in charge to manage it on His behalf. Stewardship here therefore is to commit ourselves to God's service bearing in mind that all that we have, including ourselves belong to God. Psalm 90:12.

**-The Principle of Responsibility.** Since we now have the basic knowledge that all that we have belong to God, we are therefore responsible for what we do with it. We must therefore manage God's resources in our care efficiently and according to how it pleases Him. **'Owners have rights, stewards have responsibilities'**.

**-The Principle of Accountability.** In our Bible passage, we read about the parable of the talents. In the same way, we will give account to the rightful Owner on how well we manage the resources He kept in our care.

**-The Principle of Reward. Colossians 3:23-24, Matthew 25:21.**

Our reward is with Him who sent us. We should do nothing to gain man's approval or applause. Whatever we do should be to the glory of God. May we not lose our reward in Jesus name. Amen.

## **2. For what am I responsible for and will give account of? Luke 16:1-2**

**Responsibility without Accountability amounts to Irresponsibility.** Therefore, as stewards who ought to be responsible, know that the following have been committed into our hands, and we will give account of what we do with them:

1. **Our life (body and soul):** 1 Corinthians 6:20, Luke 12:20. We are God's creation, we do not own the life we are living, and therefore we will give account of how we spend our life. We also do not have the right to take our life or anyone else's life.
2. **Our family:** This includes spouses and children. God has put these people in our care and we are responsible for their welfare especially our children, both biological and spiritual children. Psalm 127:3.
3. **The Great Commission:** Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Corinthians 9:17, 1 Thessalonians 2:4. This great commission was given to as many who have been saved and will still be saved. The assignment is to "go" into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. This is the major reason why Jesus came to the world. How many souls have you won for Him since you got saved? Be it known that you are a steward of other men's souls. Ezekiel 3:17-19.
4. **Our gifts and Talents:** Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Corinthians 12:28-31. We have been given various spiritual gifts. These gifts are to be used to edify the body of Christ and to the glory of God.
5. **God's mysteries.** 1 Corinthians 4:1.
6. **God's Treasures.** 2 Kings 12:15, 22:7.
7. **God's grace.** 1 Peter 4:10.
8. **Our money:** Luke 19:15.

## **3. Some examples of faithful stewards in the Bible**

- 1) Eliezer of Damascus: in Abraham's house. Genesis 15:2.
- 2) Joseph: in managing Potiphar's house and properties. Genesis 39:4-6.
- 3) The Apostles and Disciples: in preaching the gospel. Acts 5:42.
- 4) Nehemiah's Treasurers. Nehemiah 13:13.
- 5) Ezra: in keeping of records and teaching. Ezra 6:1-3, 7:10.
- 6) Moses. Numbers 12:7, Hebrews 3:2, 5.
- 7) Abraham. Galatians 3:9.

#### **CONCLUSION**

We as the church, while on earth, have been saddled with the responsibility of continuing the work of Jesus Christ for which we would be accountable. Would we be faithful?

#### **Next Week**

We shall conclude this topic by affirming the relationship between our physical stewardship and spiritual stewardship, studying the attributes of faithful stewards and the accompanying rewards for faithful and unfaithful stewards.

**Let us pray.**

## **LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the relationship between physical stewardship and spiritual stewardship.
2. To study the characteristics of faithful Christian stewards.
3. To know the rewards for faithful Christian stewards.
4. To make brethren realise that there are also rewards for unfaithful stewards.

## **KEY SCRIPTURE – I Corinthians 4: 2**

*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.* KJV

## **BIBLE PASSAGE – Luke 12: 35-48**

### **☐ INTRODUCTION**

A saying goes thus: the spiritual controls the physical. This means that both the spiritual and physical cooperate to bring about result. In relating this to stewardship, there must be a balance between our physical stewardship and spiritual stewardship.

Physical stewardship here refers to our commitment and the services we render in our secular jobs or businesses. While spiritual stewardship is the commitment and services we render in the house of God having to do with the use of the spiritual gifts, skills, talents and other resources that God has given us. 1 Peter 4:10.

We must therefore carry out our duties in our secular jobs diligently and have good records with our bosses and colleagues, even in our private businesses; we must relate and deal with our customers with all honesty.

If we are not faithful to our earthly boss or master who we are seeing physically, how then can we be faithful to our heavenly Master who we do not see? Our spiritual stewardship must not suffer on the basis of our physical stewardship, likewise we must not fail in our commitment and duty in the physical job we do where we earn our wages and salary. There must be a balance.

## **LESSON OUTLINES**

1. Characteristics of faithful Christian stewards
2. Rewards of faithful stewards

### **1. Characteristics of faithful Christian stewards**

- Personal Responsibility. Job 19:4.
- Diligent service. Proverbs 22:29.
- The Lord accepts their services. 2 Corinthians 5:9.
- Accountability. Luke 19:15.
- They are wise. Luke 12:42.

-Sacrificial commitment of time and resources, consecration, trustworthiness, love, joy in service, humility, generosity, loyalty and obedience to the Lord and higher authority, among other good qualities, also characterize the lives of faithful Christian stewards.

## **2. Rewards of faithful stewards**

-God always lifts them up. Genesis 41:39-44.

-More authority and power. Luke 19:17.

-Favour of God and men. Genesis 39:6.

-Promise of crown of life. Revelation 2:10.

-They also have their needs met, assurance of answered prayers and divine guidance as they become God's own project.

## **❑ CONCLUSION**

We have been called to serve God and humanity with our skills, abilities, talents and spiritual gifts. Beyond service, we will also be required at the end of our journey on earth to give account of how well we have used these God-given resources both to propagate His kingdom and benefit humanity.

If the Lord calls for you today, what account will you render? Let us ponder on this question and make urgent amendments where we have been found wanting so that we will not be rewarded for being unfaithful stewards which include: withdrawal of our stewardship and same being given to others, resulting in shame, loss of true riches and frustration (Luke 19:24, 16:3, 11-12), evil pronouncement (2 Kings 5:27), condemnation and suicide (Matthew 27:3-5), total destruction (Joshua 7:24-25), loss of position and authority (1 Samuel 15:22-23, 26-28), great suffering (Luke 12:47), sudden death (Acts 5:1-10) and ultimately, hellish home (Matthew 25:30).

**Let us pray.**













