

The background of the cover is a scenic landscape. In the foreground, a dirt path winds through a lush green field. A large, leafy tree stands prominently in the middle ground. To the right of the tree, a wooden fence runs across the field. In the distance, rolling hills are visible under a sky filled with soft, white clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

# Bible Study Lessons for adults

Volume 16

**Bible  
Study  
Lessons  
for adults**

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## Sunday School Lessons for Adults

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## *Ideas for Teaching Adults*

There are two qualities necessary to be a Sunday School teacher: You must love God and love people. The most important thing you need to do is to help the students in your class experience the love of God. You can do this by living out your personal relationship with Jesus in front of them and by teaching them to have their own personal relationship with God. Follow the instructions given on *How to Prepare a Sunday School Lesson*. Then follow these guidelines on *How to Present a Sunday School Lesson*:

### **How to Prepare a Sunday School Lesson**

#### **The Start of the Year**

At the start of this year of teaching, take about two hours to put all of the things that you would normally use at Sunday School in one packet or box. This will cut down on time each week that might otherwise be spent looking for the various items, since you will know where they are. Keep a record of addresses, birthdays, and contact details of all the students in your class. Briefly read through the whole book of lessons to get an idea of the various monthly emphases. This will give you an overview and a sense of direction. You will know how many lessons there are on each topic and not get ahead of yourself in the teaching.

#### **The Two Hours Each Week**

- 30 minutes**    **Read through the lesson and get introduced to it.** On Sunday afternoon, a full week before you teach the lesson, spend time getting acquainted with it. Pray for God to give you wisdom and insights into the best way of presenting the material to your class.
- 10 minutes**    **Record your thoughts and ideas throughout the week.** Keep a small Sunday School notebook or paper with you. As an idea comes to you, write it onto this paper so you will remember it later.
- 20 minutes**    **Read the Bible passage 3 or 4 times during the week.** Allow God's Word to change you as you think on it and read it. This reading will allow the truth that you are wanting to teach your class impact *your* life first.
- 50 minutes**    **Bring your lesson together.** Get everything that you will need from your resource packet. Read through your notes and organise the lesson into a format that suits you and that you will be able to follow and understand the best.
- 10 minutes**    **The last minute check-up.** This is the last thing that you do before you go to class on Sunday morning. Make sure that you have your Bible, your lesson, and any other materials you need. Review your outline or notes in your leader's guide one last time. Finally, take a minute or two to commit this lesson to the Lord and ask Him to use you. You have probably already prayed this several times during your devotions, but acknowledge your dependence upon Him once more.

## HOW TO PRESENT A SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Learning needs to take place on all levels: emotional, spiritual, social, and mental. Christian Education intends to provide an interaction with the Truth of the gospel in such a way as to change the lives of the students. It is not enough to know and understand a concept mentally, the truth must affect every aspect of a person's life, from the way they think or feel about a subject to the way they respond and treat other people.

Your lesson time should be carefully planned and organised to put into practise your preparation and thought. We would like to suggest the following basic outline for your Sunday School class time. Times given are based on an hour class. Numbers in parentheses are for 45 minute classes.

1. Arrive at least ten minutes before class to prepare your teaching area and set out any lesson materials that you may need.
2. Use the first **10 minutes** to greet your students as they arrive. Allow a time of informal fellowship and discussion of events of the past week. Have the class offer various prayer requests. Start the lesson with prayer, allowing class members to pray for the different requests. Take attendance and receive the offering. Follow-up on any assignment from last week and review last week's lesson. Go over any questions anyone may have from last week's sermon as well.
3. Do the EXAMINE YOUR LIFE section during the next **15 (10) minutes**. Allow time for thinking and reflection; do not expect immediate responses on every question or activity. Feel free to make adjustments so the activities will be more relevant to your students' lives.
4. The next **15 (10) minutes** should be spent on the EXPLORE THE WORD section. Remember not to PREACH or READ to them. Present the lesson in your own words.
5. The next **15 (10) minutes** should focus on EXERCISE YOUR FAITH. Emphasize the importance of allowing the truth to penetrate the lives and behaviors of each one in their everyday life.
6. During the last **5 minutes**, close with prayer and clean up the class area before going on to church.

Review the success of the lesson as soon as you can. Spend a few minutes making a note of what worked and what didn't for future reference. Remember Sunday School teaching is all about building strong relationships with God, fellow Christians and other people.

## *Helpful Hints for Teaching Adults*

### **The Fellowship Factor**

Friends are the main reason that most people choose a church. From 75 to 90 percent of the people who become church members already have friends within the congregation. In spite of the importance of good teaching in growing a Bible Fellowship group, good relationships are even more important! Fellowship is *not* something we do just to have a good time. Christian fellowship is an act of ministry because it helps people to have a sense of belonging.

To be an effective leader of an Adult Bible Fellowship group you should make it a high priority to develop and utilise the leadership skills of others in your class: \* *Involve them*: You can't do it all! The involvement of your group members can deepen their commitment and develop their leadership skills; \* *Affirm them*: Show your appreciation for your officers and leaders, and give them positive feedback; \* *Empower them*: Don't just give them a title, allow them to do the job; \* *Recognise them*: Don't let work done behind the scenes go unnoticed. Say 'thank you' often.

### **Spiritual Formation Foundations**

The three steps of spiritual transformation:

- o *Believing*: Faith in Christ cannot be separated from the Word. The proclamation of the Good News requires a response (see Romans 10:17).
- o *Belonging*: We need each other! We need the example and support that come from community. It is important to know that we belong.
- o *Becoming*: God isn't through with any of us. We are all in process. When we are serving Him and living out our faith, we are in a place where He can work in us.

The goal of every Bible Fellowship session is an obedient response to the truth of God's Word. Our purpose cannot be satisfied simply by sharing information. It is not enough for the truth to be discussed or examined or even acknowledged. We have the privilege of dealing with realities so significant that they demand a response. What begins as an exercise of reason should end with an exercise of faith. Our aim is for the truth of the Word to be internalised as belief and externalised as action.

The purpose of your Bible Fellowship group is life transformation. As leader, you will have the joy of seeing your investment in others produce remarkable changes in their living . . . sometimes. But you will also experience the pain of serving some who appear to be unchanged. How should you respond to those who seem unresponsive? Continue to be a faithful teacher and a true friend. Continue to look for opportunities to get close to them. Continue to trust God to do His good thing in the lives of those you serve!



## **The Word to Live By**

Putting God's Word to memory is one of the best defences we have against temptation. The Psalmist understood this centuries ago when he said: 'I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you' (Psalm 119:11). It is true for God's people in every age. Encourage your Bible Fellowship participants to memorise *The Word to Live By* passage on a regular basis.

## **Reaching Beyond Ourselves**

Service to others is not an extra to be tagged on to what we do now and then. It is an expression of who we are. Paul tells us to *serve one another in love* (Galatians 5:13). Your group is a perfect arena for participation in Christian service. In fact, thriving groups will always offer some kind of opportunity for meaningful involvement in ministry. Those areas of activity are often a key source of vitality within the group.

### ***How to Pray with Those Seeking God's Face***

- a. Realize the importance of the moment and give it full attention
- b. Kneel, sit or stand next to the person you intend to help.
- c. Silently pray for God's guidance and, without interrupting his/her prayer, pray for them too. He or she is the one who must pray and you are only there to assist as the Holy Spirit leads.
- d. Listen to the seeker's prayer to determine if they need help.
- e. When the seeker has finished praying, find out if he has the assurance that his prayer was answered. You do not have to know what the prayer was about.
- f. If the seeker continues to pray without coming to an end, or without being specific:
  - i. Carefully ask if you can help. Once permission has been granted,
  - ii. Find out why he/she came to pray.
  - iii. Briefly guide them with the relevant Scriptures.
  - iv. Together pray for the specific need and trust God with the request.
  - v. When you have finished praying, find out if he has the assurance that his prayer was answered. If not, briefly encourage them to continue trusting God and walking in the light as God leads them. Remind them that it is only by faith in God that they can have victory and, once the work is done in them, the Holy Spirit will testify with their spirit. There may be no physical manifestations but the assurance of the Holy Spirit will always be there.
- g. Remember to give the pastor the names of all the seekers and the outcomes of their prayers.

## **THEME: DEPENDENT UPON GOD ONLY**

### **Lesson 1 - JUDAH DEPENDS UPON GOD ONLY**

**Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:5-23**

**Other references: 2 Chronicles 17:1-19; 19:4–20:23**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realize that dependence upon God is a choice to follow God’s law daily.
- b. Understand that dependence upon God is revealed in time of testing.
- c. Understand that dependence upon God always results in victory and praise to God.

**Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 20:12**

*“O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

It is a confession of utter helplessness if God does not intervene. It is a prayer of dependence upon God only. It admits the seriousness of the problem and God’s ability to solve it. It is like a child who is hungry and has nothing to eat, she cries to her mother totally depending on her to provide food without thinking of where she will find it.

**Introduction:**

King Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king of Judah. He reigned for twenty-five years. He chose to follow the example of king David who kept the laws of the LORD God faithfully. The Bible says that Jehoshaphat’s heart was devoted to the ways of the LORD and he removed the high places and the Asherah poles from Judah (17:3-9).

**1. Jehoshaphat Teaches Judah God’s Law (2 Chronicles 17:7-9; 19:4-11)**

He sent his officials and Levites in all the country of Judah to teach the people the laws of God as found in the Book of the Law of the LORD. (These people used to worship idols instead of the LORD God.) As a result, the fear of God fell on all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah, so that they did not make war with Jehoshaphat. Chapter 19 says that Jehoshaphat went all over the country and turned people back to God. He also appointed judges to enforce the Law of God in every town and city. They were to judge fairly in the fear of the LORD God. He believed that God was present everywhere all the time. This helped him to be faithful in his dealings with the people as their king.

**2. War with the peoples of the South-eastern Countries (2 Chronicles 20:1-26)**

The people of Ammon, Moab and Edom decided to attack the country of Judah. They attacked them without any warning. The watchmen reported to Jehoshaphat about a vast army that was approaching Judah on the South of the Dead Sea. What was Judah going to do? They could choose to surrender or to fight. But they were too small in number to fight

three big countries. On the other hand, they did not want to be slaves to those countries. What could they do?

King Jehoshaphat called all the people of Judah to gather together in front of the temple. He declared a fast. All the people came and sought the LORD their God. The king spoke to the LORD their God about their problem. He confessed their powerlessness and their inability to fight for themselves. He deliberately put his trust and that of the people in God. He asked the LORD their God to fight for them. Jehoshaphat asked God to intervene for them by fighting for his people. He said, “O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you,” (20:12).

This is a prayer of total dependency upon God. He totally left himself and Judah at the mercy of God though he did not know what God was going to do and how. As the army of Judah went to meet their enemies they were led by a choir that sang songs of praise to the LORD their God who had promised them victory (20:14-17). Then God caused the three armies to fight against each other until every person was dead. When the army of Judah arrived, they found dead bodies only. What deliverance!

### **3. Celebrating God’s faithfulness (2 Chronicles 20:27-30).**

In verses 27-30, the king led the whole army back to the temple where they started before this great deliverance. They celebrated the work that God did for them when they depended on Him only. They gave God all the glory, praise and honour because He intervened. Jehoshaphat and Judah learnt to live depending upon God only even before the three countries attacked them. They lived by faith in God. The writer says of Jehoshaphat: “The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because in his early years he walked in the ways his father David had followed. He did not consult the Baals but sought the God of his father and followed his commands ...” (17:3-4). We too can do that!

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. What lesson can be learned from the life of king Jehoshaphat before the war?
- b. Does God intervene in His own way in our lives today as a church, community or as a nation? Or, do we tell Him how to intervene?
- c. Who do we *really* praise when God has intervened for us? Our faith or God?

#### **Conclusion:**

Our lesson today challenges us to imitate king Jehoshaphat and Judah in truly depending upon God only in all circumstances. Let God choose what and how He will help you. Let us begin to live our lives by faith in God only.

## **THEME: DEPENDENT UPON GOD ONLY**

### **Lesson 2 - DEPENDING UPON GOD ONLY REQUIRES COMPLETE TRUST**

**Scripture: 2 Kings 19:1-19**

**Other references: 2 Kings 18:8 - 19:37**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realise that the dependence of Hezekiah upon God was undivided.
- b. Explain that God alone is able to help in ways that he chooses, those who, against all odds, depend upon him in truth.

**Memory Verse: 2 Kings 19:17-19**

*“It is true, O LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by men’s hands. Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O LORD, are God.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

Hezekiah accepted the truth of the power that the Assyrian kings had. He also noted that the nations defeated by the Assyrians depended on idols and not on the living God. Hezekiah depended upon God only to deliver them from the Assyrians, if he chose to.

**Introduction:**

King Hezekiah became king of Judah after the death of his father, king Ahaz. King Sennacherib of Assyria had conquered Israel and deported them to Halah and Gozan. Then Sennacherib moved on to attack the cities and towns of Judah before attacking Jerusalem, the capital of Judah. At this, king Hezekiah thought silver and gold would stop Sennacherib from attacking Jerusalem. When he realized that Sennacherib was determined to attack them, he turned to the God of Israel who alone could help them.

**1. His Response to the First Threats (2 Kings 18:17 – 19:7)**

King Sennacherib sent his field commander to cause the people of Jerusalem to surrender. After making many threats, the Assyrian field commander gave Hezekiah’s officials a message for their king. The message undermined Hezekiah’s dependence upon God. It ridiculed his destruction of high places and the altars made for idols. On hearing the message, Hezekiah sent his officials to the prophet Isaiah and requested him to pray for the people who remained in Jerusalem while he went to the temple of the LORD to pray for deliverance. In reality there was nothing that Hezekiah could do. He could not defend Jerusalem with the small Judean army he had. Everything was against him. If God would not do anything, they were doomed to destruction.

In response, God promised to send Sennacherib back to his country where he would be killed with a sword. But the Assyrians were still in the country of Judah. The danger was still very close to them. Could Hezekiah still depend on what God said through Isaiah the prophet? What is to depend upon God only? Have the class discuss.

## **2. His Response to the Second Threats by Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:8-19)**

When Sennacherib received a report that Tirhaka king of Egypt was attacking him in Judah, he thought that Hezekiah had hired him to defend Jerusalem. So he sent his field commander again to tell Hezekiah with a letter written by Sennacherib that no god could defend Jerusalem, even the LORD God. He further undermined Hezekiah's dependence upon God by telling him that the god he depended on should not deceive him.

On hearing this, Hezekiah did not send word to the prophet Isaiah. He went straight to the temple of the LORD and poured out his heart to the God who alone could defend Jerusalem. He trusted God so much that he would not be shaken by the knowledge of the Assyrian accomplishments. In his short and straightforward prayer of dependence upon God, he admitted the power that Assyria had and that the gods of those countries were man-made. He concluded by showing that the LORD God is the one who could deliver them. Hezekiah came to the conclusion that only God could deliver them. Because of this, he completely put his trust on God who is able to deliver. We too, should depend upon God in time of need because he is dependable. We can learn from Hezekiah who completely depended upon God.

## **3. Steadfast Trust in God Rewarded (2 Kings 19:20-37)**

How did God deliver Jerusalem and all Judah from King Sennacherib? God fulfilled the promise He made to Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah. He killed the Assyrian army using only one angel. That was total victory – without human intervention! King Sennacherib went home without his vast army.

While he was worshiping his defeated gods in their temple, two of his sons killed him with a sword. They realized the powerlessness of their gods and that they (the gods) could not defend their father. The Jews did not fight for themselves, but God fought for them because king Hezekiah depended upon God only.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. What shows that Hezekiah's faith in God was undivided?
- b. What lesson/s have you learnt about dependency upon God only?
- c. God decides how to reveal himself and his power in every situation. Discuss and compare with the previous lesson.

### **Conclusion:**

Challenge the class to learn to depend on God in truth. He is the God who made the universe. He is all-powerful. He is dependable.

## **THEME: DEPENDENT UPON GOD ONLY**

### **Lesson 3 - THE COST OF DEPENDING UPON GOD ONLY**

**Scripture: Daniel 3:4-30**

**Other references: Exodus 20:3-5; Daniel 3:4-30; Matthew 28:20**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Understand that the worship of God demands unconditional loyalty to Him.
- b. Realise that the worship of God might end up in death.
- c. Know that the worship of God always brings glory to God.

**Memory Verse: Daniel 3:17-18**

*“If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego were committed to worship God only not because of what He could do for them, but because of who He was. They chose to be thrown into a blazing furnace instead of worshipping the gods of Nebuchadnezzar. They chose death.

**Introduction:**

King Nebuchadnezzar was a man who could do as he pleased with his subjects. He had ultimate powers over them. Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego were captives who were taken to Babylon by him. In this foreign land, they had made up their minds to be faithful to the LORD their God at any cost. What would you do if you were in their place? What does the cost of depending on God only require?

#### **1. A Determination to be Faithful to God in All Circumstances (Daniel 3:1-12)**

As the music from different kinds of instruments was played, all the officials fell to the ground and worshipped the idol made by king Nebuchadnezzar. However, three men, Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego, did not fall to their knees nor worship it. Why didn't they worship the idol?

They chose to be faithful to their God although they knew very well that this could lead to their being thrown into a blazing furnace. They knew that God said, “You shall have no other gods before me... You shall not bow down to them or worship them;” (Ex. 20:3-5). They were determined to worship the LORD God only at all cost. What were you going to do if you were in their place?

## **2. A Choice to Die for their Faith in the True God (Daniel 3:13-23)**

King Nebuchadnezzar was told about these three men. They were brought to him. He demanded that they worship his idol or they would be thrown into a blazing furnace. In **3:15c**, king Nebuchadnezzar asked them: “then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand”? Note that the idol did not threaten them but the king. This means that the worship of the idol was the worship of the king himself.

Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego chose to be thrown into the blazing furnace than to worship an idol. They understood that God could rescue them if He so chose. They also knew that God might not choose to rescue them. Their strong commitment was to worship the only Living God and not the idol. So they chose to die rather than to worship an idol.

In hot fury Nebuchadnezzar ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. The three men were tied and thrown alive into the blazing furnace. Their dependency on God led them to their death!

## **3. A Radical Response from the Observers (Daniel 3:24-30)**

The fire killed the soldiers who threw the three men into the furnace. But the God worshipped by the three was seen walking with them in the fire. Nebuchadnezzar could not believe his own eyes. He saw these men walking in the fire without being hurt. His advisers saw them too. He realized and acknowledged that Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego were servants of the Most High God. He proclaimed that there is no god who can save in this way. He decreed that their God be honored in his kingdom. As a result of their stand, they were promoted to higher responsibilities in the province of Babylonia. God saved them from the hand of king Nebuchadnezzar.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. What do you expect from worshipping God only? What if your expectations were not met?
- b. What will it cost you to depend upon God only? What if it cost your life to the point of death?
- c. Our dependency on God should always be founded on our loyalty on Him and not what He might do.

### **Conclusion:**

To worship God demands that we depend upon Him only in all situations. He cannot be worshipped with other gods or things. He might not choose to help you. Let each learner determine to depend on God in whatever situation he/she might be this week.

## **THEME: DEPENDENT UPON GOD ONLY**

### **Lesson 4 - THE QUEEN WHO RISKED HER LIFE FOR OTHERS**

**Scripture: Esther 4:1-17**

**Other references: Exodus 20:2-5; Esther 3:1-15; 4:1-17; 5:1-8; 6:1 – 8:17**

**OBJECTIVES:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Understand that dependency upon God means death to self-preservation
- b. Realise that those who depend on God receive His approval

**Memory Verse: Esther 4:16**

*“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for these three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

The Jews were to be destroyed in all the provinces ruled by king Xerxes. Esther challenged the Jews in the capital city to pray to God on her behalf in order for her life to be spared by the king. She was to go in to see the king against his law after three days of fasting and prayer.

**Introduction:**

The Jews had sinned against God by worshiping idols (**Exodus 20:2-5**). God allowed the Babylonians to defeat and take them to Babylon as captives. A time came when the Persians and Medes defeated the Babylonians. These then governed all the lands that were under the Babylonians. It was during the reign of king Xerxes that the story of the book of Esther took place in Susa (483 to 474 B.C). Esther had replaced Vashti as queen. Vashti had refused to obey the command of the king to come to him so that he could introduce her to his guests. Mordecai the Jew was Esther’s cousin who brought her up after her parents died.

#### **1. Why the Jews were in Danger (Esther 3:1-15)**

King Xerxes honored Haman the Agagite by giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles in his kingdom. He also ordered that all the officials at the gate should kneel down and pay him honor. This gave Haman some sort of divine honors. One of the officials did not kneel down nor pay him honor. He was Mordecai the Jew. When Haman was told about the act of Mordecai, he decided to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom. Haman made a decree with the authority of king. He sent it to all the lands in the kingdom. The decree ordered all non-Jews to destroy the Jews on the seventh of March the following year. This made all the Jews everywhere to fast and pray. It was a difficult time.



## **2. A Prayer of Dependency upon God Only (4:1-17)**

Mordecai fasted and prayed too, crying aloud outside the gates of the palace. Esther was told about her cousin's behavior. On enquiring, Mordecai told her what had happened and asked her to plead for the Jews to the king. But Esther could not just go to the king without the king calling for her. King Xerxes' law was that anyone who went to the king without being called would be killed unless the king extended his golden scepter to the person. This included the queen. So, how were they going to get Esther to the king?

Esther instructed Mordecai and all the Jews at the capital city to fast for three days for her. Esther and her maids fasted too. After this she could go to the king without him summoning her, although it was punishable by death. She concluded that it was better to die on their behalf with the possibility of saving the whole nation than to save her life at the expense of their lives.

## **3. The Answer of God to Their Prayer (5:1-8; 6:1 – 8:17)**

After fasting for three days, Queen Esther risked her life and went into the hall where the king sat. By God's grace, when the king saw her, he extended his golden sceptre. In this way her life was spared.

Esther invited the king and Haman to the banquet she had prepared for them. On the second day of the banquet she told the king about the plan Haman had made to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom, including the queen. On hearing this, the king was very angry at Haman. He commanded that:

- a. Haman be executed on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai (7:9-10).
- b. Made Mordecai the prime minister of the land.
- c. Instructed Mordecai to issue a decree with the authority of the king – one that counteracted the decree to destroy the Jews (8:7-17).
- d. On the seventh of March, governors of all the provinces sided with the Jews. As a result, the enemies of the Jews were killed in the place of the Jews (9:1-17).

Thus God in his way defended the Jews. They depended on Him to intervene when there was no hope for their salvation.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. What did Mordecai do when the officials were told to worship Haman? Discuss.
- b. What lesson have you learnt in the faith of Mordecai and Esther in their God?

### **Conclusion:**

You and I are challenged to depend upon God in truth. Think of things that compete for your loyalty in the place of God: ancestral spirits, persecution, poverty, etc. How are you going to deal with these challenges?

## **THEME: A HOLY SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLE**

### **Lesson 5 - LIVING OUTSIDE THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**Scriptures: Galatians 5:16-21**

**Other References: Romans 8: 5-14**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Identify the characteristics of a life controlled by the sinful nature.
- b. Realize the need for heart cleansing

**Memory verse: Galatians 5:16**

*“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”*

**Explanation of memory verse:**

To live by the Spirit means to be controlled and led by the Holy Spirit in our Christian walk. When led by the Spirit we are able to please God and not the sinful nature and its desires. The Holy Spirit puts to death the desires of the flesh so that we are able to live a holy life.

**Introduction:**

When a person is controlled by another, he or she does what the controlling power wants. Some believers are controlled by the flesh rather than by the Holy Spirit. It would be wonderful if all Christians would be led by the Holy Spirit daily. Today in our lesson we want to look at what a life controlled by the sinful nature is like.

#### **1. A life controlled by the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19)**

The sinful nature is the condition that makes us to sin. It pulls us to sin. That condition makes us to be hostile and disobedient to God (**Romans 8:7**). When a believer is controlled by the sinful nature he or she cannot please God. They do not do what they want but what sin wants. It is important to note that the Apostle Paul was addressing believers in the Galatian churches who were living in ways that did not please God. They were worldly.

Paul specifies the works of the sinful nature which must be watched against. These acts are as a result of the corrupt and depraved nature. They are condemned by the Scriptures. A closer look at them will make us realize that by doing them one will be breaking the commandments of God.

- Sins against the first and second commandment are idolatry and witchcraft
- Sins against the seventh commandment are adultery, fornication, etc.
- Sins against the tenth commandment are jealousy, discord, etc.

Other sins are against ourselves like drunkenness. In listing these acts Paul goes on to make it clear that the list is not concluded as he says, “... **and the like**” (vs. 21). These works of the sinful nature will make us not to inherit the kingdom of God. Do we see some of these sinful acts in the life of believers? If so where is the problem? Discuss.

## **2. The way out (Romans 8:13)**

There should be a way out so that the believer is able to walk in the Holy Spirit and not fulfil these acts of the flesh. In order to have that corrupted condition taken out there is need for heart cleansing. As believers we need to be filled by the Holy Spirit. Once He fills us we are cleansed from that sinful nature and our lives controlled by the Holy Spirit. There is a need “... **to put to death the misdeeds of the body**” (Romans 8:13). At repentance sins that have been committed are forgiven but the sinful nature remains until the heart is cleansed by the Holy Spirit. This is also known as the second work of grace.

### **Discussion questions:**

- a. Divisions and power struggles are found among Christians (Galatians 5:20). How can we explain this?
- b. How can we pursue a life of holiness?

### **Conclusion:**

A life controlled by the sinful nature never pleases God. As believers we need to move away from that kind of life for in the end it keeps us out of the kingdom of God. We are supposed to live a life controlled by the Holy Spirit. The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit. In our next lesson we are going to look at how believers can be cleansed from this sinful nature.

## **THEME: A HOLY SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLE**

### **Lesson 6 - HOW TO BE FILLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**Scriptures: Matthew 3:1-12; Acts 15:6-9; Romans 12:1-2**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realize the need for heart cleansing
- b. Explain how we are filled by the Holy Spirit

**Memory Verse: Acts 15:8-9**

*“God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.”*

**Explanation of memory verse:**

From this Scripture we realize that God wants our hearts to be cleansed from the sinful nature. Heart purity is the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer and that is necessary for us to live a life of holiness. After one is saved he or she needs the second work of grace otherwise the sinful nature continues to show itself.

**Introduction:**

Teacher to ask review questions from last week’s lesson. Last week we learnt that the sinful nature pulls the believer towards sin. We also discussed various acts of the sinful nature. Today we want to look at how believers can be freed from the sinful nature.

From today’s reading in Matthew we see John the Baptist preaching the gospel of repentance. He points out that they needed to be forgiven their sins. He goes on to say that One more powerful than him was to come. John was referring to Jesus Christ and meant that He was to baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

**1. Why our hearts need to be cleansed? (Matthew 3:1-12; Acts 15:9)**

From John’s preaching in Matthew we clearly learn that repentance is the beginning of our relationship with God. Our sins are forgiven but the sinful nature that pulls us to sin will still be in us and thus we struggle with sin. Sinful nature can only be cleansed by the work of the Holy Spirit. John promised his hearers “... **the Holy Spirit and fire ...**” (**Matthew 3:11**). Those who mine metals like gold, put it in fire to purify it so that the real gold is separated from impurities. In the end the gold is pure and sparkling. Likewise, believers after being saved need their hearts to be purified by the Holy Spirit. This was evidenced on

the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the 120 disciples, **“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire ...” (Acts 2:3)**. And Peter later testified that their hearts were purified on that day **(Acts 15:9)**. When the Holy Spirit fills our life we are purified from the sinful nature. We are able to live a Spirit-filled life. This is God’s will for all believers as we see from John the Baptist and Peter. The result of a Holy Spirit-filled life is a holy life. The believer is now controlled by the Holy Spirit and able to live a life free from the control of sin. The corrupted nature is completely cleansed.

## **2. How to be filled with the Holy Spirit**

- a. **God’s part:** In order for the believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit God does His part whilst the believer also has a role to play. God’s part is to fill us with His Spirit just as He promised. God’s Word promises us through John the Baptist **(11)** that Christ is to baptize us with the Holy Spirit. The promise was to those who had repented of their sins. It is also a valid promise to us. God’s part is to fulfil this promise to us.
  
- b. **The believer’s part.** Our role is to come to God with a strong desire to have our hearts cleansed by the Holy Spirit. We need to desire to be cleansed from the sinful nature. We need to be willing to live a holy life. Just as we were saved by faith we also need to believe that God can cleanse our hearts by faith through the Holy Spirit. Peter points out that God accepted the Gentiles and gave them the Holy Spirit and their hearts were purified by faith **(Acts 15:9)**. We need to trust that God can do what He has promised through His Word. It’s not an issue of feelings but faith. God is ready and willing to purify us so that we can live a Holy Spirit-filled life.

We also need to come before God, yielding our hearts and totally giving ourselves to God. We are called upon by the Apostle Paul to offer our **“... bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God...” (Romans 12:1)**. The believer has to come before God and consecrate oneself so that God can fill them with His Spirit.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the sign that a believer is filled with the Holy Spirit?
2. Why is it that some believers continue to struggle with sin?

### **Conclusion:**

From today’s lesson we realize that it is God’s plan and desire that believers’ hearts are cleansed by the Holy Spirit. Our part is to willingly give ourselves by faith trusting that God can purify us as He has promised in the Scriptures. Teacher is to pray with those who need to be filled by the Holy Spirit *(if needed, ask for assistance from the pastor)*.

## **THEME: A HOLY SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLE**

### **Lesson 7 - LIFE IN THE SPIRIT**

#### **Scripture: Galatians 5:16-26**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should:

- a. Define the fruit of the Spirit
- b. Explain the importance of the fruit of the Spirit
- c. Explain each virtue of the fruit of the Spirit

#### **Memory verse: Galatians 5:25**

*“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*

#### **Explanation of memory verse:**

Since we are God’s children our new life must ultimately be controlled by the Holy Spirit. We are to live our Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit and to be in step with the Spirit daily. Being in step means to obey Him as he leads us to a holy life.

#### **Introduction:**

When one grows an orange tree, after years of caring for the plant one will reap nothing but oranges. This rule cannot be broken. However, it is sad to note that believers sometimes do not produce the expected fruit. What could be the problem? *Briefly discuss.*

#### **1. What is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)**

**Fruit** is the natural product that results from the growth of a plant. It develops naturally as part of the life of a plant. **Fruit of the Spirit** - consists of attitudes and actions that enhance one’s relationship with God and with other people. The fruit of the Spirit is the evidence of a Holy Spirit-filled life or Christ likeness. This is purely the work of the Holy Spirit. The fruit in all believers should be the same. The fruit of the Spirit identifies us with Christ. **Fruit (vs. 22)** is singular whereas **acts of the sinful nature (vs. 19)** are in plural. This stresses the truth that the fruit is one cluster with many parts as one diamond has many sides.

#### **2. The Importance of the fruit of the Spirit**

First and foremost, God is interested in who **we are**. Our character is very important because we will take it into eternity. To have the fruit of the Spirit is to be Christ-like because He exemplified all these virtues during His earthly life. Fruit develops over time, matures and ripens slowly. Through the work of the Holy Spirit the believer’s character is made to conform to Christ. It is sad to see that in church there are believers whose lives are

not controlled by the Holy Spirit and therefore not exemplifying the life of Christ. It is important that we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives and lead us so that we can produce the fruit of the Spirit.

### **3. Virtues that make up the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)**

In our Christian walk situations come our way tempting us to express the exact opposite quality. We are therefore bound to make choices with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our part is to obey as He leads us. The Holy Spirit produces the following virtues in our lives:

- **Love** – this means agape love. It is love for God and other people. The Holy Spirit helps us to love even those that are difficult to us.
- **Joy** – this is rejoicing in all situations of life and delighting in God’s grace. We have joy in the midst of sorrow. The Spirit gives us joy whereas the world merely gives happiness.
- **Peace** – this is being at ease with God, our conscience and with others. The believer has a desire for peace and is a peacemaker. There is no war in our hearts.
- **Patience** – this is enduring in our faith and being able to bear with those that may not be easy to get along with. The believer is able to bear injuries and disappointments.
- **Kindness and goodness** – being able to do good to God and people. One seeks the goodness of others in every situation.
- **Faithfulness** – being able to be honest to God, self and people. Believers show fidelity, openness, justice and honesty in what they profess and promise.
- **Gentleness** – ability to keep oneself in balance. One accepts the will of God without complaining. One shows a sweetness of temper especially toward inferiors and one is not easily angered.
- **Self control** – the ability to not to go overboard in the enjoyment of life and its desires. We know where to stop in our actions without hurting ourselves and others.

#### **Discussion questions:**

1. Identify situations in which Christ showed these virtues in His earthly life.
2. If all Christians were to show the fruit of the Spirit, we would not be having problems like adultery, divisions in church, marital unfaithfulness and others. Discuss.

#### **Conclusion:**

It is important that as God’s children we allow the Holy Spirit to lead and control our lives so that we produce a Christ like character to the glory of God. There is a need for us to live a Spirit-filled life daily. We are to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He seeks to live in us and to guide us.

## **THEME: A HOLY SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLE**

### **Lesson 8 - LOVE, THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY**

**Scriptures: John 13:34-35; 1Corinthians 12:31b-13:13**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Define love according to the Scriptures
- b. List the characteristics of this love
- c. Explain how love can be practiced among believers

**Memory Verse: Romans 5:5**

*“And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”*

**Explanation of memory verse:**

We cannot love until we are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. God out of His mercy pours out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Because He pours it, that love is made to overflow to other believers. When the Spirit fills us we are moved to love God and others. There is no way we can contain that love but to give it away.

**Introduction:**

*Teacher is to briefly discuss the following sayings with class:*

- a. ‘They do not love that do not show their love’
- b. ‘Faults are thick where love is thin’

#### **1. The foundation of love (Gal 5:22)**

For us to love like Christ we must be born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. The new life in Christ is a life of love. And, love is the first aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal 5:22**). A Holy Spirit-filled disciple loves. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot love God and our fellow brothers and sisters. This love that comes from God into our hearts is called agape love. This kind of love is one that is given to others whether or not it is returned. We do not need to be paid for it.

#### **2. The characteristics of love (1 Corinthians 13)**

In this letter Paul advised the believers of Corinth to desire and seek the most excellent way in their Christian life. These Christians were having several spiritual problems like taking each other to court, divisions and others. In the letter Paul explains what love is and what it is not.

##### **a. Love (is):**



**Patient (vs. 4)** – able to endure in the things of God and bear with those who may not be easy to get along with. We hold on rather than give up.

**Kind** – able to seek the goodness and comfort of others. One is courteous, merciful and has an open hand to help others. One is reminded of the good Samaritan.

**Protects (vs. 7)** – it seeks to redeem a brother who has fallen from grace without condoning his or her sins.

**Always trusts** – always has hope in God and others.

**Hopes-** Believes and looks up to God for the best.

**Perseveres** - holds on to God when in difficult situations and makes one to be calm under pressure.

#### **b. Love does not (vss. 4-6)**

**Envy** – one does not get grieved when others do good or excel

**Boast-** does not speak highly of oneself or despise others

**Seek its own** - but considers the needs of others ahead of ourselves.

**Easily get angered** - remains calm under provocation

**Keep a record of wrong-** we do not keep grudges.

### **3. Christ has commanded us to love (John13: 34-35)**

Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to love one another just as He loved them. We learn that this love that has been poured into our hearts has to overflow to other believers. Love has to be seen through our attitudes and actions as we relate to one another. When there is love in the believers it cannot be hidden. It is important to realize that when we love one another the world will know that we are His disciples. Love gives us an identity (**v35**). It is important as Christians that we show who we really are if we are to win the world for Christ. No one would like to come to a church where there is no love. Love is best seen in action. Love makes us aware of the needs of others and moves us to meet them. This may be meeting the material, spiritual, etc. needs of other Christians.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Spirit-filled Christians understand love differently from non-believers. What are the differences?
2. How can Jesus' command, if practiced, influence our relations as believers and the growth of the church?

#### **Conclusion:**

As Paul has shown us the most excellent way of love let us allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives so that we can love one another. Our church will be different giving us our true identity as Christ's disciples. *Teacher is to ask class members to hold hands as they pray together as a sign of love.*

## **THEME: A HOLY SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLE**

### **Lesson 9 - SPIRIT-FILLED CHRISTIANS OBEY GOD.**

**Scriptures: Genesis 22:1-19**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Define obedience
- b. Identify whom we are to obey
- c. State the blessings of obedience

**Memory Verse: James 1:22**

*“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”*

#### **Explanation of memory verse:**

Many of us have heard so much about God and His commandments but only a few have taken a step further to obey Him. Obedience is **knowing** what God expects of us and **doing** His will. If we only hear without doing the word we deceive ourselves. If we hear the word and do not take any action, we are doing nothing before God.

#### **Introduction:**

*Teacher is to briefly discuss the following story with class:* One African brother said, ‘Brethren, what the good Lord will tell me to do in His blessed book, that I will do. If I see in it that I must jump through the stone wall, I will do.’

#### **1. What is obedience?**

It is following directions given by another. People **hear and do** what someone commands in order to show obedience. People who have faith in God prove it by hearing and obeying God’s word like Abraham. From our text, we find Abraham obeying God’s voice (2-3). God wanted him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac who was born in Abraham’s old age. It is encouraging to note that Abraham treated God’s word with the urgency it deserves as he left the following morning to go to the Mount of Moriah. Just imagine if it were you or me. This is a good sign of obedience and it would be wonderful if all believers lived that way. We are not to obey when we feel like it but because God says so. We obey despite the consequences. It was not easy for Abraham to take his only son to sacrifice but he obeyed. At times obedience puts our lives in danger. The Spirit-filled disciples after Pentecost obeyed God and the result was imprisonment, beatings and death. The Spirit’s abiding presence enables all believers to carry out God’s will and live obediently before Him.

#### **2. Whom should we obey?**

- a. **As disciples of Christ we have to obey God (vs. 3)**

Obedience is a matter of choice as Abraham heard God's voice and obeyed. The next morning, he went on his way. Our obedience to God should show urgency and reverence. God continues to speak to us today through the Holy Spirit but at times we have chosen to disobey. When He speaks we have to obey

**b. We have to obey God's written Word.**

God also speaks to us through His written Word. In the Bible are His commandments, decrees and laws and we are to obey them. Doing God's commandments is a sign of obedience to God. Taking a step in doing God's Word shows our faith in God.

*Discussion Question. What do you think our lives would be like as Christians if we had the obedience of Abraham?*

**3. What obedience does in our Christian life**

**Obedience pleases God (vs. 17).** God was pleased by Abraham's obedience and to show His pleasure, He made a promise to Abraham. God promised to bless him and make his descendants as numerous as the stars. When God is happy He releases His blessings upon our lives. God promised Abraham a great nation out of him. Obedience comes first then blessings. This is God's rule in the Bible. Many times Christians pray for blessings yet disobey God.

**Through our obedience other people are blessed (v18).** Some people, Christians and non Christians experience blessings because of our obedience. In a family where parents are obedient to God spiritual and material blessings will come upon the children and even relatives. From Abraham's obedience Isaac and others were blessed.

**It makes us grow spiritually.** Every time we obey we grow in our spiritual life. The more we obey the more we grow. Let us imagine Abraham leaving Mount Moriah rejoicing in his heart as God had revealed himself as Jehovah-Jireh. There should have been peace, joy and the desire to obey more in future.

**Discussion Question:**

1. Someone said "The truth is that salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the holy Scriptures." Discuss.
2. Can a Holy Spirit-filled disciple disobey God?

**Conclusion:**

From today's lesson we are called to live a life of obedience to God for the comfort of our souls. We might have disobeyed but it is high time we yield our hearts to God so as to obey him. Spirit-filled believers are obedient to God.

## **THEME: A DISCIPLE-MAKER WITH A REAL BURDEN FOR THE LOST**

### **Lesson 10 - CHRISTIANS: A SENT PEOPLE**

**Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 10: 1-12**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. List the core values of the Church of the Nazarene
2. Define the word disciple
3. Realize our mission
4. Identify the importance of our mission

**Memory verse: John 20:21**

*And Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, I am sending you."*

**Explanation of memory verse:**

Many are happy to be given work by the leaders of this world, but to Christians it is more wonderful to be sent by God. Like our Lord Jesus we are a sent people. We are to reach out to all the lost souls. It is such a wonderful privilege to be sent by the Lord and to be part of his mission.

**Introduction:**

Each member of the class is to count the years he or she has been part of the local church and how many souls they have brought to Christ. Then they should briefly share their feelings, strengths and weaknesses about this matter.

#### **1. Our characteristics as Christians**

The following characteristics briefly tell of who we are and our beliefs. In our lesson today we will focus on the third one that emphasizes reaching out to the lost.

- We are a Christian people – we believe and proclaim that Jesus Christ is our Saviour
- We are a holiness people – we believe that God has called us to a holy life.
- We are a sent people – our mission is to make Christ-like disciples in the nations.

#### **2. What is a disciple? (Matthew 28:19)**

A disciple is one who follows the **teaching** and **example** of another person. Christians are disciples of the Lord Jesus. Being His disciples, we are called to **go** and make Christ-like disciples of all nations. To be saved is only the beginning of following Christ for we have a lifetime duty to perform. We are saved to **go**.

### **3. Realizing our mission (Luke 10:1-12)**

**Every Christian has a mission.** The word mission means “to send somebody”. It also means a job, task, duty, etc. Christians are people sent by Christ. It is important to realize that once we are saved we have a mission to accomplish.

We are sent into the world to make disciples for Christ (**Matthew 28:19**). The duty is clearly stated, but most believers are so relaxed and have no burden or urgency for the dying world.

We are all sent and that includes you and I together with pastors, district superintendents and other church officers. Every Christian has to go and make disciples just as Jesus sent the 72 disciples (**Luke 10:1**) and they went.

### **4. The importance of our mission.**

- a. When we obey Christ’s command (**John 20:21**) we are continuing the mission of Christ himself. Having been sent by the Father, He also sends us. His mission was to bring salvation to the world and He can continue it through our going.
- b. Leading others to Christ reflects the high value we place on souls. Sinners are hopeless and frustrated but when we share Christ with them we bring life and hope to them. What a wonderful gift to share.
- c. By sharing Christ with someone we impact his or her eternal destiny. When a soul is saved he or she enters into a relationship with Christ – a relationship that leads to eternity.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What makes many believers think that only pastors are sent?
2. If all of us were to obey Christ and **go**, how will that impact the local church?

### **Conclusion:**

As Christians we have a mission to accomplish for Christ. It is to reach out to the lost. Class members are to stand up, hold hands and pray together that the Holy Spirit may put in their hearts the burden for lost souls.

## **THEME: A DISCIPLE-MAKER WITH A REAL BURDEN FOR THE LOST**

### **Lesson 11 - THE GREAT COMMISSION IS FOR ME**

**Scriptures: Matthew 28: 19-20, Acts 1:6-8**

**Other references: James 4:17; 2 Peter 3:9**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a.** List hindrances to the Great Commission.
- b.** Explain the mind of a disciple.

**Memory verse: Acts 2:32**

*“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are witnesses of the fact.”*

#### **Explanation of memory verse:**

People find it difficult to remain silent after witnessing something unusual. In the same way the disciples could not keep quiet after the resurrection of Christ and the Pentecost. Peter, while explaining what was happening at Pentecost, could not resist proclaiming the fact of Jesus’ resurrection.

#### **Introduction:**

Why do we usually talk about a doctor, lawyer or any other person that had been helpful to us? Why do we not frequently witness for Christ? Identify and briefly discuss the reasons.

#### **1. Why we do not share Christ with the lost?**

- a. Disobedience** – In the words of Jesus (**Matthew 28:19**) we are clearly told to **go** but we choose to **stay** and ignore the call. Disobedience is sin and more so when we have been taught and know the truth (**James 4:17**).
- b. Being preoccupied with power struggles (Acts 1:6)** –In the minds of the disciples was worldly power. As believers we have spent our energies fighting for church positions than bringing souls to Christ. It would help if we would compete to bring souls to Christ and to the church.
- c. Having no burden for the lost** – Some believers have no burden for the lost and so fail to see the danger that sinners are in. These dangers befall sinners here on earth and in hell after death.
- d. Focusing on petty issues** – before Pentecost, the disciples focused on petty issues like the restoration of the kingdom of Israel instead of thinking about the spiritual kingdom (**Acts 1:6**). We spend much time and effort on petty issues yet forgetting

the lost around us. *The class is to identify things that we spend time on instead of witnessing.*

## **2. How to think like a true disciple of Christ.**

As His disciples we are to obey His teaching and follow His example in our daily lives. Christ thought of sinners and always reached out to them. In order to reach out we need to have the mind of a disciple by:

- a. **Shifting from being self-centred (Acts 1:7-8):** Jesus told the disciples to stop thinking about power but to focus on Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the rest of the world. We have to change our way of thinking.
- b. **Seeing issues in a godly way (2 Peter 3:9):** The will of God is that all people repent from their sins. God is not happy with the state of sinners and it would be wise to embrace this in our hearts. God wants all sinners to come to repentance. We need to have a burden for the lost.
- c. **Moving away from excuses.** We may have many excuses for not going. As long as we have sinners around us no excuses will be acceptable to God. Let us use every opportunity to share Christ with others. It is wise to realize how God promises to help and equip us in our mission and so we have no excuses.
- d. **Focusing on eternity.** Stop and think about how our relatives, friends and neighbours will spend eternity. It may be frightening but if we embrace the mind of Christ we will desire to help them to be saved from hell. On the other hand, what will happen to us if we disobey God?

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What inspiration do we get from the disciples after Pentecost?
2. What areas or people can be called '*my Jerusalem*' as one pursues the Great Commission?

### **Conclusion:**

The Great Commission is for each Christian and we have no excuse for not going. As we close our lesson today, let us pray for the salvation of those close to us and that we would reach out to the unsaved. Commit to go and invite someone to church next Sunday.

## **THEME: A DISCIPLE-MAKER WITH A REAL BURDEN FOR THE LOST**

### **Lesson 12 - EACH ONE WIN ONE**

**Scripture: John 1:35-51**

**Other references: Luke 10:17**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Identify some of the steps we are to take in order to witness.
- b. List the blessings of winning others to Christ.

**Memory verse: 2 Corinthians 5:20a**

*“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”*

**Explanation of memory verse:**

An ambassador is a nation’s representative in another country. When representing his country one has to speak well about his home country. As Christians we are called upon to live as Christ’s ambassadors and it is a great honour to represent the heavenly kingdom.

**Introduction:**

At least one class member should briefly explain how he came to the Lord and tell who led them to Christ. Let the class discuss their feelings about people who led them to Christ considering that they now have seen and tasted that the Lord is good.

#### **1. Making mission a priority**

Every one has to prioritize winning souls to Christ. We **all** have to do our part in the mission. Today’s Scripture shows that Andrew and Philip made the making of disciples a priority (**vss. 41-42, 45**). At this early point in their relationship with Christ they were able to realize their mission and prioritize it. Reaching out to the lost for Christ is exciting. Andrew and Philip (**vs. 41, 45**) did not waste time but shared the good news. In order to be Christ’s ambassadors we must do the following:

- **Regard making disciples a matter of priority** like these two disciples, Andrew and Philip. If all Christians would have such a burden for the lost, God’s kingdom and our church would multiply all the time. To make disciples should come before any other church assignment we might have.



- **We should speak and not be quiet-** Andrew and Philip said “**We have found ...**” (vs. 41, 45). They were excited and bold to talk about their new discovery. If God has truly done something in us we should speak out clearly.
- **Start with those close to us** – Andrew and Philip started with those nearest to them. Andrew looked for his blood brother (vs. 41-42). It is sad when one leaves his relatives to perish.
- **We do not need to make big sermons to the lost** – but a mere invitation to Christ or church service is enough to change the life of the lost. Philip gave a simple invitation (vs. 46b)

## 2. Blessings of winning souls to Christ.

There are blessings we experience in our personal lives and as a church when we make disciples.

- **Spiritual growth** – when we obey Christ’s command **to go** we grow in grace. Growing Christians are going Christians. Andrew must have been encouraged spiritually to see his brother come to Christ.
- **Excitement** – our hearts get filled with joy and excitement as we do Christ’s mission (**Luke 10:17**). It is always exciting to report an accomplished mission.
- **Our local church will grow numerically** – God is interested in big numbers. With more people in our church, some of our burdens will become lighter.
- **Creation of present and future servants and church leaders** – Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. Peter later preached to more than 3000 people on the day of Pentecost, did great missionary work and wrote two epistles.
- **We reap blessings (and material blessings too)** – some of the new disciples may bless us materially in different times of need. There will be more people around us to help care for one another and meet basic needs.

NB. *Class members are to add to this list of blessings.*

### Discussion Questions:

1. If all of us were to have a real burden for the lost, how would that change the local church, district and community?
2. What opportunities do we let go instead of witnessing for Christ?

### Conclusion

We are to **go** and make disciples just like Andrew and Philip. Each one is to win one – at least. Have the class pray together for the spirit of boldness in sharing the gospel to the lost.

## **THEME: A DISCIPLE-MAKER WITH A REAL BURDEN FOR THE LOST**

### **Lesson 13 - MAKING THE CONNECTION**

**Scripture: John 4:1-30, 39-42**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to

- a. List the characteristics of the mind of the unsaved
- b. Explain the steps we can take in order to connect with sinners.

**Memory Verse: Colossians 4:5**

*“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.”*

#### **Explanation of memory verse:**

As believers we need wisdom so that we can use every opportunity that comes our way in order to connect with sinners. Witnessing must become our lifestyle and when that happens we will use every chance we get to speak for Christ. So many chances come our way.

#### **Introduction:**

Allow the class to briefly share their experiences of the past three weeks when they attempted to win the unsaved to Christ.

#### **1. Understanding the mind of the unsaved.**

Those lost in sin have a certain mind-set towards God, the church and individual believers. In order to effectively reach them we need to understand how they think.

The following characterize their mind-set:

- a. **Sinners are hostile to the church but friendly to God.** They appreciate the existence of God but are not willing to be saved and be part of the church.
- b. **Sinners have a muddled view of Christian teachings (vs. 19-20, 25).** The Samaritan woman had an idea about the places of worship and that a Messiah was to come. She had half truths.
- c. **Sinners have a desire for God to meet their physical needs in practical ways (vs. 15)** and not mere knowledge of Him. In the African set-up people want to see the power of God in their total life. That is why many go to false prophets and witchdoctors.
- d. **The unsaved do not want to become slaves to someone** but seek true relationships. They desire unconditional love and are cautious in seeking relationships (vs. 9). The Samaritan woman was cautious.

- e. **The lost may be prepared to visit the church** but they want to be invited. They have certain fears in them.

*NB. Let the class make additions.*

## 2. Some of the ways to connect with sinners

Jesus Christ gives us a model of connecting with the unsaved for them to come to God. As Jesus interacted with the Samaritan woman we learn some important ways for making the connection:

- a. **Get closer to the lost (vs. 4, 9).** Jesus had to go through Samaria where Jews were not welcome. He had to break all barriers in order to connect. Let us go where sinners are e.g. their homes.
- b. **Use the available opportunities (vs. 7).** Jesus used the need for water by the Samaritan woman in order to talk about the kingdom of God. In everyday life various opportunities come our way.
- c. **Create curiosity in them (vs. 10-12).** Having seized the opportunity, He made her curious. Help sinners see how God can intervene in their lives using their point of need.
- d. **Build on their misinformed ideas or half truths (vs. 11, 15, 20).** The woman thought of real water and viewed Jesus as just making claims about the temple in Jerusalem. Direct sinners to the real truth. Help them understand the Scriptures correctly.
- e. **Be honest with sinners (vs. 10, 17).** Help them to see the dangers they are in and how much they need God. Let us speak the truth in love.
- f. **Impact sinners with our words and action (vs. 28).** Jesus words touched the woman who later on impacted the whole city. A holy life can influence the lost for Christ.

### Discussion Question:

1. What other ways can we use to build relationships with sinners in order to connect them to Christ?

### Conclusion:

As Christians, we are to use all means available to us in order to connect sinners with Christ. We are told to **“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity” (Colossians 4:5)**. We meet sinners at work, on the roads, in our home, parties and many other places. As we end our theme for the month we are challenged to have a burden for the lost and to go and make disciples.

## **THEME: GIVING AUTHORITY TO GOD’S WORD**

### **Lesson 14 - GOD GUIDES US THROUGH HIS WORD**

**Scriptures: Isaiah 48:16-19; Psalm 119:105-112**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Explain the goodness of God’s Word for our lives
- b. State the dangers of ignoring His Word
- c. State the steps we are to take to make the Word a lamp and a light of our lives

**Memory Verse: Psalm 119:105**

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”*

**Explanation of memory verse:**

When one walks in darkness there are so many dangers that can befall that person. He can stumble or get lost because one will not be seeing the way. This is true of our spiritual lives. We will get lost because we have no guidance from God’s Word. A whole society can get lost without the Word.

**Introduction:**

Every society has its own values and rules to guide them in their daily conduct but to Christians, the Word of God is the ultimate authority. The Word gives us the best values to live on. As adults we may have had some situations in which we ignored the Word and ended up reaping problems. *Ask for a few testimonies in this regard.*

#### **1. The goodness of the Word of God (Isaiah 48:17-18)**

The Word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah was brought to the children of Israel. God identifies himself as the Redeemer of Israel, the Holy One of Israel and as the Lord God. God personalizes his relationship with Israel. God is both loving and caring. He says that it is He “... **who teaches you what is best for you, ...**” (vs. 17b). If we allow God’s Word to lead us good things will follow us. Some see the Word as burdensome but it is for our good. The Word of God warns us in good time. For instance, when the Word says we should not commit adultery it is for our spiritual and physical good. Those who have disobeyed have suffered the consequences. We see the goodness of His Word in that God does not want us to get lost. He guides us with His truth. He lets his Word show us the way and help us take the right road. *Teacher is to ask learners of situations where they obeyed and realized blessings.*

## 2. **The dangers of disobeying His Word (Isaiah 48:18-19)**

When Israel disobeyed God's Word, they ended up in exile in Babylon. God had sent several prophets with the Word, but they were stubborn. Believers may have their lives entangled in various difficulties like Israel. The human values and traditions, we sometimes hold onto, cannot surpass the guidance that we have in God's Word. Israel tried to live in her own way but did not succeed. Below are some of the problems of ignoring God's word.

- a. **There is no peace between God and us (vs. 18):** As believers we are to enjoy peace with God for the comfort of our souls. However, this peace only comes when we pay attention to God's Word. With God's peace our consciences will be at ease.
- b. **Without the Word we cannot live a righteous life (vs. 18):** It is only His Word that can make us live right. To be righteous is to be holy and upright in accordance with God's standard. The Word of God gives us the standard or measurement to live by. The Word is the authoritative standard of God to us. Let us remember that God hears the prayer of the righteous.
- c. **We can miss material blessings (19):** Isaiah says that Israel would have increased her descendants. Some of us have missed several blessings due to disobedience. Disobeying God's Word will definitely limit our blessings. (*Discuss*)

## 3. **What we need to do (Psalm 119:105-112)**

As Christians we need to view the Word as the best guide of our lives. It should be our *lamp and light* to guide us in this dark world. To achieve this, we are to:

- a. Commit ourselves to the Word by studying and obeying it (**106**). We need to read it daily for the benefit of our spiritual life. Jesus said that we cannot live on bread alone. Sadly, many believers take in little of the Word but more of the newspaper.
- b. Have a teachable mind (**108**)
- c. Determine never to forget it the Word deliberately but to keep close to it (**109**). We need to make time for it instead of reading it in our spare time.
- d. View the Word as our inheritance forever (**111**)

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Considering the Word of God through **Isaiah 48:18**, what makes believers to be uninterested in God's Word at times?
2. What should believers do to be able to spend more time studying the Scriptures?

### **Conclusion:**

Today's lesson calls us to live according to God's Word. It is there to guide us daily. We will never go wrong in our walk if we have it as our lamp and light. We can only despise it to our own peril like Israel. As God's children let us live by His Word. There are spiritual and material blessings when we live by the Word.

## **THEME: GIVING AUTHORITY TO GOD’S WORD**

### **Lesson 15 - PRACTICING THE WORD**

**SCRIPTURE: Luke 10:25-37**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realize the need for true faith
- b. Explain the importance of practicing the Word for the benefit of others

**Memory Verse: James 4:17**

*“Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.”*

#### **Explanation of memory verse:**

God has revealed His will to us through the Word. It is not only for us to know but to put it into action. When we deliberately disobey the truth that we already know, then we are guilty of the sin of omission. We learn the Word so that we can practice it for the comfort of our souls and the benefit of those that are around us. If all believers were to put the Word into action, we would impact our community for Christ.

#### **Introduction:**

What can make our Christian faith to be relevant to the community? *Discuss with the class.* If we would put the Word that we have learnt into action, we would impact our community for Christ. The world needs to see the gospel being relevant and practical to their lives.

#### **1. The content of true faith (Luke 10:25-29)**

Our reading today teaches that true religion is love for God and other people (**vs. 27**). In response to the lawyer’s question, Jesus instructs him to do what the word says (**vs. 28**). If we fully accept the authority of the Word we will be able to love God and other people. As Christians we should not forget that we have people in our community who need to see the goodness of the gospel. Later on in the story we find that the Samaritan became a good witness of the Word. If the lawyer had lived up to the law of God, he would have fulfilled the two most important commandments (**27**).

The priest going to Jerusalem might have been going to the temple to do his priestly duties or to worship. The Levites assisted priests around the temple. This particular Levite was probably going to the temple to perform his duties. Since the robbed man was left to die the priest and the Levite did not want to be ceremonially unclean. Coming into contact with dead bodies made Jews unclean. Also, the two considered their lives to be more important

and would not stop to help. They failed to put the commandment of love into practice. In our community we have bruised, needy and hurting people. What are we doing to practically show true obedience to God's Word?

## **2. The importance of practicing the Word (Luke 10:30-35)**

As Christians, if we put the truth of God into action, the world would see the value of the gospel. We are at times tempted to look away from suffering people forgetting that any act of kindness can do wonders to some life. We need to look at the hurting world with compassion. Showing kindness as believers is putting the Word of God into action. The Samaritan was moved with compassion. He gave emergency help, took the patient to an inn, paid for his bill and offered to give more help if needed. When we live by the Word we:

- a. Make unbelievers to realize the beauty of the gospel. When we put the Word into action we make ourselves relevant to the hopeless world.
- b. Create fertile opportunities for the preaching of the gospel. A helping hand given to a neighbour can make one turn to Christ. People need to see care in us. We can only witness to people we love and care about. I don't think the robbed man would have refused an invitation to church after the act of compassion. But, even if he refused, he would never forget the kindness he received.
- c. Help the world to see how genuine our faith is. People today want to see the Word of God in action more than hearing sermons. Discipleship is better caught than taught.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How can Christians show a caring attitude to a bruised community?
2. Why is Jesus repeating the idea of doing in **verses 28** and **37**?

### **Conclusion:**

It is important as believers to practice the Word of God to make it relevant to the people around us. The hurting, suffering and hopeless world can be helped if Christians would live by the Word. An act of kindness creates a fertile ground for the preaching of the gospel. In the story of the good Samaritan Jesus repeats that we must put the Word of God into action.

## **THEME: GIVING AUTHORITY TO GOD’S WORD**

### **Lesson 16 - OBEYING GOD’S WORD IMPACTS SOCIETY**

**Scriptures: Isaiah 58:6-12**

**Other references: Isaiah 58**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Say why some of our prayers have not been answered
- b. Identify some of the challenges in our society
- c. State ways which Christians can use to meet those challenges
- d. Realize the blessings of obeying the Word of God

**Memory verse: 1 John 3:18**

*“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”*

#### **Explanation of memory verse:**

Many times when we see people in difficulties we tend to sympathize with them and stop there. In this Scripture John is calling us as Christians to show our love in tangible ways that can benefit people. Just to say “I love you” is not enough but to do something that can help people see love is what is needed. We must do this and practice the Word of God daily.

#### **Introduction:**

*Ask the learners to list some of the reasons God has not answered our prayers.* In our lesson today we want to look at some of the reasons why God has not answered our prayers. God is not happy when we look away from the ills of society and continue as if all is well. As Christians we have known the truth and it is only by putting the Word of God into action that we will help address some of society’s problems. Isaiah’s prophecy to Israel (**Chapter 58**) was to awaken Israel to the injustices of the day. Unless the Israelites corrected those problems God was not going to answer their prayers.

#### **1. Why the prayers of the Israelites were not answered (Isaiah 58:1-7)**

The Israelites of Isaiah’s day were very religious. They prayed to God, fasted and sought the face of God (**vss. 1-3**). The Word of God through the prophet was that they acted as if they had not forsaken the commandments of the Lord (**2**). To forsake the commandments is failing to obey the Word of the Lord. According to the Scripture Israel’s prayers were not heard because:

- a. They rebelled against God’s Word (**1-2**)
- b. They acted as they pleased rather than pleasing God (**3**)



- c. They exploited their workers and fought among themselves (3-4)
- d. They ignored those in chains of injustice, oppressed, hungry, without shelter and clothing (6-7)

Are we guilty of the same? How? *Briefly discuss.* Like the Israelites, it may be for these same reasons that our prayers are not answered and thus we are not impacting our society.

## **2. Some of the problems of our society**

Our communities are not different from the situation that Isaiah prophesied against. Today we have some of these problems but some of us have left them (the problems) to the politicians to solve alone. God's Word to Israel is also meant for us. We must obey it and wisely engage ourselves in these situations. *Ask the learners to identify and briefly discuss these problems.*

## **3. What we are to do (Isaiah 58:6-7)**

From these verses we are called to take action against injustices, seek the freedom of the oppressed, share food with the hungry, clothe the naked and do other works of compassion. We have to stand up, teach, act, break the silence and speak up against the social ills in our communities. To keep quiet and do nothing is to disobey the Word of God. We need to break the silence. For example, some are being discriminated at workplaces because they are HIV positive. We know the truth and so we are to live according to the Word. The hurting communities should see the relevance of the gospel. *Briefly discuss how believers may act against these social evils.*

## **4. The blessing of doing God's Word (Isaiah 58:8-11)**

God sent His Word to Israel so that they can address the problems of the day. When we hear and do the Word, several blessings come our way. They include answered prayer, people will see our righteous acts and glorify God, our light will shine in the dark world, the Lord will guide us, and meet our needs.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. Some believers are very spiritual but earthly useless. Discuss
- b. How can our obedience to God's Word contribute to church growth?

### **Conclusion:**

After hearing from Isaiah's prophecy to Israel we need to address some of the problems in our communities rather than pretend as if we do not see them. There is something you and I can contribute as Christians and by so doing we will make the world appreciate the power of the Word of God. Can you commit to doing something together as a group – one step at a time?

## **THEME: GIVING AUTHORITY TO GOD’S WORD**

### **Lesson 17 - CHANGING SOCIETY THROUGH THE WORD**

**Scripture: Titus 2:1-15**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Identify Biblical values to be imparted to various groups
- b. Identify the final goal of sound teaching

**Memory verse: Titus 2:1**

*“You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.”*

#### **Explanation of memory verse:**

Imparting knowledge to other believers is very important but more importantly is the content of what we teach. We should not merely teach others but the Word of God must change lives so that society may be changed. If we are not correctly taught, then we impart wrong teachings that will result in wrong societal values.

#### **Introduction:**

Paul had left Titus, his disciple on the Island of Crete to solve a number of problems facing the church there. From a survey of his letter to Titus, the church was lacking in the teaching of sound doctrine. This resulted in the saints failing to fittingly impact the society. Proper moral values must flow from the Christian truth properly taught to believers. Effective teaching of Christian truths enables believers to exceed by far the highest standards the unbelieving world knows. Thus Paul takes time to outline the teaching for the various groups in the church.

#### **1. The Biblical values to be taught to the various groups (Titus 2:1-9)**

Paul emphasizes that the Word must be taught. That is why he repeats the words teach or teaching about ten times in only fifteen verses. He encouraged Titus to view the Word as a very important tool in shaping the spiritual life of the Christians. Titus is urged and guided to teach it to the various groups of believers: *(Discuss the virtues listed with the class).*

- a. **Older men (2):** They were supposed to be self controlled, worthy of respect, sound in faith, etc. Older men should embrace these virtues so that they can be exemplary in the faith. These virtues are marks of maturity.
- b. **Older women (3):** They were to be reverent and not to be slanderous, etc., so that they could also teach the younger women. These virtues are more related to how they use the much time that older women usually have on their hands.
- c. **Young men (6):** They were to be self-controlled, to do good, show integrity, etc. Youth is not to be wasted away in sin but should be used to build and show godly virtues.

- d. **Slaves (9):** They were to be submissive to their masters, trustworthy, etc. The equivalent of slave environment would be our work-places. Even here God had to be glorified.

All these groups of believers were to be taught through the Word. They needed sound doctrine from Titus. Sound doctrine goes further to mean a healthy Christian faith. These groups of believers were to be taught and so that they could maintain high moral standards.

## 2. The importance of imparting the Word

The objective of Titus' teaching the Word to these believers was twofold:

- a. The Word taught by Titus was to change the lives of the older men and women so that they could influence the younger ones (**vss. 4-6**). The teaching was intended to bring about spiritual growth in faith based on sound teaching. This teaching would also result in sound family relationships. Good Christian families are a good foundation for a strong church. The church starts in the home. Younger men and women were to learn proper Christian family values through the Word and the example of the elders.
- b. Titus needed to impart sound doctrine so that the disciples could be sound in faith so as to influence the community in Crete. Their holy lives would positively influence the unbelievers. Paul emphasizes this point repeatedly. If the younger men and women were discipled well, then **“no one will malign the word of God” (vs. 5)**. A holy life would also silence those who opposed the Christians (**vss. 7-8**). The believers would, through a holy life, make the gospel attractive to the unsaved (**vs. 9**). When we learn the truth of the Word and apply it in our own lives we will definitely influence our society for Christ. Holiness makes the gospel attractive.

When Christians learn the Word of God and apply it daily it results in changed lives, families and society. This is the challenge before us: our faith is to impart true Christian values so that the gospel is made relevant to our community. If we cannot influence our society then we need to check our doctrine.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Would you agree with Paul that sound doctrine prepares the saints to change society?
2. How far are we succeeding as saints to influence our society? What areas do we need to improve on?

### Conclusion:

It is important that we get grounded in sound doctrine so that we embrace proper Christian virtues that can influence our society. Holiness is to be taught and lived if we are to change the world for Christ. It is important to evaluate what we are learning and imparting to others and the conduct of our lives.

## **THEME: AN EXTRA-ORDINARY PERSON OF PRAYER**

### **Lesson 18 - MEETING GOD DAILY IN PRAYER**

**Scriptures: Psalm 5:1-3; Mark 1:35**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Define prayer
- b. Explain the importance of setting aside time for prayer
- c. State our attitudes in prayer

**Memory Verse: Mark 1:35**

*“Very early in the morning, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”*

**Explanation of memory verse:**

We have no excellent teacher besides Jesus Christ our true model when it comes to prayer. He set aside times so as to converse with the Father. He also chose to be away from other people and prayed alone. We are all called upon to set aside time to pray to God.

**Introduction:**

A poor woman was offered half a kingdom if she wouldn't pray all day. She rejected it saying, 'No sir, not for all the worlds this side of heaven'. *What would you say about the attitude of this woman with regards to prayer? Discuss.*

#### **1. What is prayer?**

Prayer is talking **with** God. It is a conversation with our heavenly Father. Since we have a relationship with God we need to talk with Him. In everyday life, children converse with their parents. Christians are also called to do the same with God. From our Scripture reading we find that King David used to set aside time to converse with God just like Christ (**Psalm 5:3**).

#### **2. Setting aside time for prayer.**

Christians are to make special times to converse with God. This should be a daily discipline. David was not an ordinary person but a busy king. Yet he still managed to set aside time in the morning to pray. Many believers agree that the best way to start a day is by prayer because:

- Jesus is our best example (**Mark1:35**)
- The Psalmist had morning prayer time (**Psalms 5:3**)

- Many other saints followed the example of Christ. I remember hearing my pastor praying as early as 4:00 in the morning.
- The day is more blessed when we start with prayer. God leads us to a victorious life after we pray for He can align our thoughts and actions for the day.

While morning prayers are commendable, the fact is that God is always available to us. Therefore, to set aside the time for prayer, as David and Jesus did, and be disciplined to lovingly keep it, is the key to a successful life of prayer.

### 3. The temptation

Adults tend to think that they have more pressing issues to attend to and so prayer is not regarded as priority. Some of us rush to work and fields without praying. Lets us consider that:

- Jesus started with prayer even though he had a busy schedule – preaching, teaching and healing.
  - David was a busy king and warrior but he set aside time for God (**Psalm 5:3**).
- There is no reason good enough to deny our souls the sweet hour of prayer.

### 4. Our attitude when we pray (Psalm 5:2-3)

When we come to God in prayer we must:

- **Be humble:** Have a heart free from pride but filled with meekness. David saw God as King, Lord and the Source of help (**vs. 2**). David humbled himself even though he was a king.
- **Have faith:** David went before God trusting that the Lord hears him. He knew that he had to present his requests to God. Doubt is the opposite of faith.
- **Continue to pray until God answers (Psalm 5:3):** God is never in a hurry. Let us therefore wait for Him in expectation as David says: “... **in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation**” (**vs. 3b**).

### Discussion Questions:

1. Some people say they don't need to set aside a regular time for prayer. They pray on the run or when need arises'. Discuss.
2. What temptations do wives and husbands face with regards to prayer?

### Conclusion:

We are to follow the example of Christ: setting and keeping times to pray. Prayer is part of the Christian's daily life. Ask the class to prepare testimonies of how they practiced the lesson.

## **THEME: AN EXTRA-ORDINARY PERSON OF PRAYER**

### **Lesson 19 - PRAYING WITH A REAL BURDEN**

**Scriptures: Nehemiah 1:4-11**

**Other references: Nehemiah 2:1-10**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realise that a person of prayer has a real burden for the well-being of others
- b. Understand that this person is willing to intervene and be active in the solution
- c. Have a desire to develop this attitude as a person of prayer

**Memory verse: Nehemiah 1:11b**

*“Give your servant success today by granting him favour in the presence of this man (the king).”*

#### **Explanation of memory verse**

Whenever people are in need, they tend to expect help to come from some place or someone else but themselves. This tendency is also evident when people pray. However, Nehemiah made himself available to be part of the solution if God would grant it.

#### **Introduction**

What are some of the things we do when very close family members are seriously ill? How much does it cost us in time, money and other resources? *Discuss and note how big a burden it becomes on the heart, the great lengths people go to and their willingness to do whatever it takes to get their beloved well.* Would we put that much effort when praying for the salvation of that family member if he or she was not saved? What about other people? Today we will see, through Nehemiah, some of the qualities a praying person should have. These qualities include:

#### **1. A real concern for the well-being of others (Nehemiah 1:1-4; 2:2)**

Although Nehemiah was in a comfortable situation serving the king in Susa, he had an interest in the wellbeing of the Israelites in Jerusalem and asked about them (**vss. 2, 11c**). The news about the sad state of Jerusalem broke his heart. He wept. This means that he literally cried out loud with much brokenness. His brokenness was described from the king’s observation as the “sadness of heart” (**vs. 3-4; 2:2**). It was a deep-seated sadness lying heavily on his heart. He could not have peace with the state of affairs in Jerusalem.

## **2. A complete trust in “the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 1:4-11)**

In desperation, Nehemiah turned to God (vss. 4, 6). As if to make sure that the reader understands which God it was, it is stated that it was “the God of heaven” (vs. 4). This phrase seems to have been Nehemiah’s favourite. It probably reminded him of God’s greatness in the face of difficulties. This God is the only God, who is everywhere at the same time, knows all things and has all the power. Nehemiah was so far away from Jerusalem and could not help, but he knew the God who could. Therefore, he mourned, fasted and prayed for them day and night before the God of heaven. For days he poured out his heart and pleaded on behalf of the Israelites (vss. 5-11).

## **3. A focused and specific prayer (Nehemiah 1:5-11)**

Nehemiah’s prayer was focused and specific. In his prayer, he acknowledged the greatness of God (vs. 5); pleaded on the basis of God’s faithfulness, His promises and relationship with the Israelites (vss. 5, 8-10); he confessed their sins and his (vs. 6b-7) and asked for specific help without dictating (vs. 11). Nehemiah could therefore see God’s hand at work whenever the prayer was answered. It is no wonder that this prayer is sometimes used as a model to show the different components of a balanced prayer – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.

## **4. An unreserved laying down of one’s life for others (Nehemiah 1:11b-2:6)**

In 1:11b and 2:5 we learn that Nehemiah prayed and requested to be part of the solution if God would grant it. In prayer, he willingly laid down his life to stand in the gap and help the Jews in Jerusalem. Strengthened by the Lord, he became bold to state his desire when questioned by the king about his sadness and plans (2:1-5). It is amazing that at this point, Nehemiah was ready to share his desire and plans (vss. 4-8). It was also at this time that he was able to secure the king’s permission, letters of authority, resources and protection so he can undertake the task. What readiness and availability! It seems like soon after getting the report Nehemiah was able to make up his mind to be part of the solution. The rest of the book is the story of how, with God’s help, he rebuilt the walls in spite of opposition.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What do you think will happen if every member would pray with a real burden on their heart like Nehemiah did for people and situations they are praying for?
2. How would you feel if they told you, 'I was praying for you this morning.'

### **Conclusion**

We need to learn to pray with a real concern on our heart, trust God completely, be more focused and specific in our prayers and unreservedly lay down our lives to be used by God as He pleases to bring solutions to our world.

## **THEME: AN EXTRA-ORDINARY PERSON OF PRAYER**

### **Lesson 20 - SEEKING GOD'S WILL IN PRAYER**

**Scriptures: 2 Sam 5:17-25; Luke 22:39-46**

**Other References: 1 Samuel 18:28-30; 23:1-13; Nehemiah 1:4; 2:4-8; Matthew 6:10; Acts 13:1-3;**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Explain why we need to know and do God's will
- b. State what we need to do to know God's will

**Memory verse: Luke 22:42**

*"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."*

#### **Explanation of memory verse:**

Many times when we are faced with difficult situations, even in our spiritual journey, we are tempted to be self-centred. We tend to move away from the will of God possibly because it may require more than what we are willing to give. However, it would be good for the comfort of our souls if we could learn from Jesus Christ, who when facing Golgotha prayed for the will of the Father.

#### **Introduction:**

*Ask class members to relate experiences in their spiritual lives when they have had to make difficult decisions. Let them briefly explain how they made those decisions and how they affected their lives.* One of the qualities of a praying person is to seek God's will in everything. It is only as they know and do God's will that their lives may be effective and glorify God's name.

#### **1. Why we need to know and do God's will (2 Sam 5:17-25; Luke 22:43)**

God makes His will known to us through His Word and by answering our prayers. Many times we struggle between God's will and our will. In our spiritual journey we make decisions with regards to marriage, career, place, ministry and many others. We need to know the will of God, the only reliable guidance we have, because:

- a. We are assured of victory and the best for our lives. David had victory because he was in God's will (**vs. 20**). Jesus was also enabled to face the cross (**Luke 22:43**)
- c. We are assured of God's presence in our lives. The presence of God was with David (**vs. 24**).



- b. We are limited in wisdom and knowledge but God is all knowing. He knows even our future.

## **2. What we need to do to know God's will (Luke 22:42; 2 Samuel 5:17-25).**

As we strive to make right decisions we are to:

- a. Develop a habit of seeking God's will in all things. David did and when faced with major decisions he could easily remember to seek God's will. It could also be that in the process he learned to distinguish God's voice from others. Jesus' life was also characterised by knowing and doing God's will.
- b. Earnestly seek God's guidance especially during difficult times. Follow Christ's example. He prayed for the will of the Father when He faced the cross. We are to put ourselves at God's disposal. As a man Christ dreaded the cross so He prayed for God's will to be done (**Luke 22:42**). David also inquired of the Lord before attacking his enemies (**2 Samuel 5:17-25**).

## **3. God's response**

When we earnestly seek the will of God, we are certain that He will answer. God speaks to us and answers prayers in several ways:

- a. God can open or close doors for us. God opened doors for Nehemiah (**Nehemiah 1:4; 2:4-8**).
- b. God can speak to us through the Holy Spirit when we pray. This is why it is important to learn to be quiet before God and let Him speak to us (**Acts 13:1-3**).
- c. God can send other believers to speak and confirm His will for our lives. The other saints confirmed the calling of Paul and Barnabas (**Acts 13:3**) by placing their hands on them.
- d. If we choose His perfect will we will have peace in our hearts no matter how difficult the task may be. Our conscience will be at ease.

## **Discuss Questions**

1. 'Our Christian life experiences should be a reflection of God's will'. Discuss.
2. Why did Jesus include this statement in the Lord's prayer, '*your will be done*' (**Matthew 6:10**)?

## **Conclusion**

We need to pray earnestly before we make decisions, especially major ones. We have learnt something from David, Jesus and the Apostles. They sought the perfect will of God in their lives and God did not disappoint them. Close with a prayer of commitment to seek God's will in all things and a willingness to do it.

## **THEME: AN EXTRA-ORDINARY PERSON OF PRAYER**

### **Lesson 21 - PRAYING TOGETHER AS A CHURCH**

**Scriptures: Acts 4:23-31, Acts 12:1-17**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. State how we are to pray as a church
2. State what happens when the church prays together.

**Memory verse: Acts 4:31**

*“After they had prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”*

**Explanation of memory verse:**

The church’s greatest weapon is prayer. God always answers our prayers whenever we stand to pray earnestly as a church. The believers in the book of Acts prayed and God answered in three ways: an earthquake, a refilling by the Holy Spirit and the speaking of the Word boldly. Let us stop and imagine what would happen if all Christians would sincerely pray!

**Introduction:**

*The teacher is to discuss the following quotations with the class:*

- a. “Does the Bible say, anywhere from Genesis to Revelations, ‘*my house shall be called a house of preaching*’. Preaching and music are fine but should not override prayer”.
- b. ‘The Christian church was launched as a result of prayer not preaching (**Acts1:14**) but prayer meetings are not popular today’.

The weekly program of some of the local churches, usually includes a main service on Sunday, Bible study, prayer meeting and others. If a local church has no prayer meeting, then it is a church in trouble. While it is important to pray as individuals it is **equally** important to pray together as believers. True disciples of Christ meet for prayers as a church. Therefore, one who is committed to prayer will within reason, respect the times the church has set aside for prayer.

**1. How we are to pray as a church**

- a. **We are to pray in unity (Acts 4:24).** Prayers and tears are the church’s weapons especially when we cry in unity. Peter’s release was God’s response to a praying church (**Acts 12:5, 12**).

- b. **We are to pray earnestly (Acts 12:5).** This is to pray with all our hearts and with a strong desire for the anticipated outcome. We are to cry with our souls to God by faith. The church should be turned into a labour room. The sounds of women giving birth are not pleasant but the results are wonderful.
- c. **We are to pray constantly (Acts 12:12).** The saints prayed all night interceding for Peter. The church has to always pray.
- d. **We are to pray as a big army (Acts 4:31).** The believers came together. There is power in numbers, the more we are the bigger the victory. When one is absent from a prayer meeting they weaken the army of Christ.
- e. We have to attend prayer meetings, not as and when we feel like it but always.  
*Ask class members to mention some of the things that we can pray for as a church.*

## 2. What happens when we pray as a church

*Briefly discuss this statement with the class: All the successes of the church should be born out of prayer otherwise they are fake'. There are several things that happen when the church comes together in prayer and below are some of them:*

- a. **The church is filled with the presence of God.** We can see the full working of the Holy Spirit as He continues to fill us (Acts 4:31). Lives inspired by the Holy Spirit enjoy the favour of all people they interact with.
- b. **The word is preached with power and boldness (vs. 31).** The Word of God convicts sinners and sanctifies saints. Many times believers complain about the pastor's sermon but never take time to pray for him or her. The Word of God when backed by prayer brings transformation.
- c. **Miracles will happen (Acts 12:6-7)** Peter was miraculously released from prison. The greatest miracle we can have is the salvation of souls. More people will come to the Lord and our church. The church will grow in all areas of ministry.
- d. **The church will not compromise its standards** When a local church fails to pray, compromise and other sins come in.

### Discussion Questions:

1. James spends time in devotions every morning and will do everything else but does not attend the church prayer meeting. Discuss this situation.
2. What reasons do believers have for not attending the prayer meetings? Are they valid before God?

### Conclusion:

There is need for all Christians to pray together as a church. As Christians we are all encouraged to attend the next prayer meeting. The church needs our support in prayer. When we pray together as a church we participate in the victory of God's church.

## **THEME: A LEADER FAITHFUL TO GOD, FAMILY AND CHURCH**

### **Lesson 22 - OBEDIENT AND FAITHFUL TO ONESELF**

**Scripture:** I Samuel 24:1-7

**Other references:** I Samuel 24:1-7; 26:1-12; 1 Timothy 1:19; Hebrews 9:14

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realise that a believer is first obedient to his conscience – good and cleansed by the blood of Christ.
- b. Understand that a believer is faithful to self first and thus show faithfulness to God.
- c. Appreciate that loving God in truth, leads to true love of self and of others.

**Memory Verse: I Samuel 24:6**

*“He said to his men, ‘The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord’.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

David spared King Saul’s life because he listened to his conscience rather than following the advice of his soldiers. He refused to attack Saul only because Saul was God’s anointed king over Israel. David chose to leave vengeance in the hands of God.

**Introduction:**

How does God speak to us as believers? How do we know that what we are doing is right or wrong? Can one really live a good life without doing wrong? How can that happen? These are real questions asked by real people in their quest to know and do what is right in daily life.

#### **1. David Was Obedient to His Conscience (I Samuel 24:3-7)**

David was anointed to be the king of Israel after king Saul. However, Saul had decided to kill David so that Jonathan, Saul’s son, would be the next king. Because of Saul’s intention to kill him, David ran for his life. King Saul set his heart to hunt down David so that he could kill him. In one of his pursuits, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. David and his men were inside the same cave. David’s soldiers advised him to slay King Saul; but David only cut off a corner of Saul’s robe unnoticed. At this deed, David was struck by his conscience. What could David do? Let the class discuss the possibilities. King Saul was David’s biggest enemy. He would kill David at the first chance he got. But when David had that chance he spared Saul’s life. Why? Because David feared God he decided to listen to his conscience. As in all believers His conscience was God’s way of speaking to him. Had he refused to obey his conscience, he would have disobeyed God. Why?

Because:

- a. God put the conscience in everyone's life and speaks to us through it.
- b. The conscience helps us know the difference between what is right and what is wrong.
- c. Based on a right relationship with God, the conscience helps us make the right decisions.
- d. To obey one's conscience in the fear of God is to obey God.

David, on the basis of his relationship with God, developed and strengthened his conscience by obeying it. This showed how truly obedient he was to God. Indeed, a mark of honesty and faithfulness to oneself! As Christians, it is important to understand that the foundation for a good conscience before God, is a right relationship with Him through Jesus Christ our Lord and the abiding Holy Spirit.

## **2. David Was Faithful to His Conscience (I Samuel 26:1-12)**

David was also faithful to himself. Saul did not try to kill David once but several times. Three times he tried to kill him while David lived in Saul's palace. Another three times Saul took 3000 chosen soldiers to hunt David whenever he was told of where David was hiding. What would you have done if you had a chance to kill an enemy who had failed to kill you four times? Let the class discuss.

On one occasion when Saul was in pursuit of David for the third time, David had another opportunity to kill him. But what did David do this time? He again spared Saul's life. Why did he do this to his would-be-killer? David, faithful to himself, continued to obey his conscience. He would have justified killing king Saul. But David knew what God expected of him and would not lie to himself.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. Why should Christians be obedient to their consciences?
- b. Why is it important for us as Christian leaders to be faithful to ourselves?
- c. Considering the fact that in one way or another all believers are leaders, how can we as believers impact our world today by being faithful to ourselves?

### **Conclusion:**

Because it is the individual alone who may know what God is saying to them, it is essential that each one be faithful to self as a sign of their faithfulness to God. Let us commit to be sensitive and, against all odds, faithful to ourselves through the week. Encourage the class to, as much as possible, keep record of the instances when this faithfulness was practiced and/or challenged and the outcomes thereof. These testimonies may be shared the following week. Close with a prayer of commitment towards this end.

## THEME: A LEADER FAITHFUL TO GOD, FAMILY AND CHURCH

### Lesson 23 - OBEDIENT AND FAITHFUL TO GOD

**Scripture:** Hebrews 3:1-6

**Other references:** Numbers 12:1-16; Exodus 40:16; Philippians 2:5-11

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Explain how obedience to God and perseverance are evidences of faithfulness to Him
- b. Realise that God's purposes can only be achieved through faithfulness to Him
- c. Seek to be faithful to God in all things

**Memory Verse: Hebrews 3:5a**

*"Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future."*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

Moses put his trust in God because of who God was. He took God at His word and followed His commands and instructions without deviation. Therefore, he was able to serve Israel, God's people, exactly as God wanted him to and earned himself the reputation of being faithful in all God's house.

**Introduction:**

Even though God is all-powerful He depends on people to achieve His purpose to redeem the world. However, it is only the faithful in every generation that He can count on. Moses was one of those. What are the things that hinder people from being faithful to God? Briefly discuss.

#### **1. Moses commended for his faithfulness (Exodus 40:16; Numbers 12:7; Hebrews 3:2,5)**

Although Moses had been reluctant at first to undertake the task God entrusted to him, when he finally did he became so faithful to God that he was commended for it. The evidence of his faithfulness was his perseverance and obedience in everything that God commanded him (**Exodus 40:16**). There are many other references to this fact. It is therefore not surprising that when Aaron and Miriam talked against Moses, the Lord vindicated him on the grounds of his faithfulness: **"he is faithful in all my house"** (**Numbers 12:7**).

Then, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, arguing for the supremacy of Christ above Moses, chose to focus on faithfulness. He could have focused on things like their great miraculous deeds, prayers, etc. But he chose faithfulness – a characteristic that could be

emulated by all if they desired to irrespective of one's gifts or ministry. It is said that Moses was faithful **"in all God's house"** (**Hebrews 3:2,5**). In this case, God's house refers to God's people, Israel. Considering how the Israelites failed many times to be faithful to God, it is both humbling and challenging that Moses was able to stand out as one who was faithful against all odds. Apart from constant obedience, this called, among other things, for perseverance and patience with self, God and His people. And, God was not ashamed to call him, Moses, His servant. If Christian leaders in any sphere of life would be this faithful, how would our world be impacted? Can this be said of you even though others may be failing to be faithful?

## **2. Jesus, the ultimate example of faithfulness (Hebrews 3:1-6; Philippians 2:5-11)**

While Moses' faithfulness was commendable, Jesus was the ultimate example that must be followed. The writer called the believers to fix their thoughts on Jesus who **"was faithful to the one who appointed him"** (**Hebrews 3:1,2**). Jesus Christ was sent by God to earth to show the way to God and He also died and rose again so people can become children of God. He was faithful to God and was therefore able to finish His mission by obedience and perseverance. He was **"faithful as a son over God's house"** (**Hebrews 3:6**) and not as a servant. Although Jesus, as the creator, was over all things including His church, He did not take advantage of His status and do as He pleased. Rather, He **"became obedient to death – even death on a cross"** (**Philippians 2:8**). If Christian leaders in any sphere of life would be this faithful to God, how would our world be impacted? Can this be said of you even though you have to pay the ultimate cost – your very life?

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. Why obedience and perseverance are important evidences of faithfulness to God?
- b. How is God's purpose achieved through faithfulness to Him?
- c. Considering the fact that in one way or another all believers are leaders, how can we as believers impact our world today by being faithful to God?

### **Conclusion:**

Moses was commended for his faithfulness that stood against all odds. And, our Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate example that God's purposes can only be achieved when faithfulness to God is upheld. If as Christian leaders in any sphere of life, we would be this faithful to God, how would our world be impacted? Can this be said of you even though others may be failing to be faithful? Can this be said of you even though you have to pay the ultimate cost – your very life?

Give a chance to those who want to pray seeking to commit themselves to being faithful to God at all cost. Close the session with prayer, thanking God for those who made commitments and for the class that there will be increased determination to be faithful to God in all things.

## **THEME: A LEADER FAITHFUL TO GOD, FAMILY AND CHURCH**

### **Lesson 24 - A FAITHFUL AND SUPPORTIVE PARENT**

**Scripture:** Job 1:1-12

**Other references:** Job 1:1-12; 2:1-10; 29:1-25; Psalm 101:1-8

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Understand that a Christian leader must be blameless before God and the family
- b. Realise that the Christian leader's first responsibility is their family
- c. Make a decision to take responsibility for the spiritual well-being of their families

**Memory Verse: Psalm 101:2b-3**

*"I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing."*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

Our memory verse is a good New Year resolution for Christian leaders. It is part of an eight-verse resolution that the Psalmist made. It expresses a determination to walk blamelessly before one's household and thus build the morals of the family by example.

**Introduction:**

When we hear about Job we usually think about his suffering. But what else can be learnt from him as a respected leader of his community? What role did he play between his children and God? Today let us look into his character and what he did for his children.

#### **1. A Blameless Parent (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3)**

Job was a believer in God who was known by his character.

- a. He was blameless: innocent and not guilty of anything in the sight of God.
- b. He was upright: not deviating from God's standard, honest and honourable.
- c. He feared God: aware of God, respected God, and submitted to God's standards.
- d. He shunned evil: rejected what was in opposition with God's character.

Job was a holy person in the sight of God and the people of his country. This is attested to by the author (**vs. 1**) and by God himself (**1:8; 2:3**). His relationship with God was not a private matter. He simply lived by these standards and other people could see it. It tells us that our spiritual lives are not and cannot be private, because what we believe is what spills out in our life. Have you thought of this: 'If Job could have such a blameless character in the Old Testament times, how much more should we since we have the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit available to us'?

#### **2. Caring for the Spiritual Welfare of the Family (Job 1:4-5)**

Since Job was blameless before God, he wanted his children to be blameless, too. Job took the moral life of his children very seriously and left nothing to chance. After every birthday feast of each child, he purified them. He also made atonement to cleanse them from sins they might have committed so that they too could lead blameless lives. In the Old



Testament times the head of the family was responsible for all spiritual and moral life of his family. He would act as a priest and teacher of the things that pertain to God. That is why we see Job sacrificing on behalf of his children. The word “purify” here means to sanctify or make them holy by means of sacrifices. It also meant to set them apart for God or make them acceptable to Him. So Job made it possible for his children to have a relationship with God through the sacrifices as was required in the Old Testament. As a leader of his household, Job showed the way to God in every possible way.

What about Job’s wife? The Bible does not tell us much about her except what we read in chapter 2:9, 10. But we may assume that she had a good relationship with her husband, for that is the most essential ingredient for a healthy upbringing of children. It seems like she stuck with Job through his illness because at his restoration, there is no replacement or return of the wife. On the other hand, God did not reprimand her like He did Job’s friends. In keeping his life blameless, Job must have paid the necessary attention to his relationship with his wife.

What can you as a Christian leader do to lead your family to and in a relationship with God? You and I do not need to make sacrifices like Job did. Jesus Christ has been sacrificed for us. However, we need to lead our families to God. Having family devotion times on a daily basis could be one way of doing it. We must have times to sing, read the Bible and pray together as a family. This will bring the family together, plant and nurture seeds that will remain in the children and hopefully be passed on to their children. Will this practice guarantee that the whole family will become believers? Briefly discuss.

Leaders faithful to their families must take responsibility for their love for God and the well being of their families including the spiritual. Job did it. We can do it. We must do it.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. How can one be blameless in this day and age?
- b. Why should leaders take responsibility for the spiritual and moral life of their family?
- c. In what ways may Christian leaders nurture their families spiritually? How can the church help?
- d. Considering the fact that in one way or another all believers are leaders, how can we as believers impact our world today by being faithful to our families?

### **Conclusion:**

Challenge members to be intentional about family devotions during the coming week. Plan for them to share how they have progressed in the next session. Have the class pray together and commit to being more faithful regarding the spiritual well being of their families.

## **THEME: A LEADER FAITHFUL TO GOD, FAMILY AND CHURCH**

### **Lesson 25 - FAITHFUL TO GOD AND HIS PEOPLE**

**Scripture:** Esther 4:1-17; Exodus 20:3-6

**Other references:** Exodus 20:3-6; Esther 3:1-15; 4:1-17; 5:1-2; 6:1-14; 7:1-10; 8:1-9; 9:1-4.

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realise that faithfulness to God leads to selflessness.
- b. Understand that selflessness leads to faithfulness to the church
- c. Understand that God rewards faithfulness both to Him and to the church, His body.

**Memory Verse:** Esther 4:16

*“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for these three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”*

#### **Explanation of the memory verse:**

The Jews were to be destroyed in all the provinces ruled by king Xerxes. Esther challenged the Jews in the capital to pray to God on her behalf in order for her life to be spared by the king. After the three days, day and night of prayers, she would go to see the king against the law of the king to plead for the Jews. She gave her life for their lives.

#### **Introduction:**

In life we want people to be faithful to us. We do not like to be around people who are not faithful. What do we mean by faithfulness? Let the class discuss. Yes, faithfulness means that one is truthful and reliable, unwavering in their commitments and can thus be trusted.

#### **1. The Faithfulness of Mordecai to God (Exodus 20:2-6; Esther 3:1-9)**

In **Exodus 20:2-6** God commanded the Israelites that they should have no other gods; they should not bow before them nor worship them. Mordecai understood this commandment very well. But whenever one chooses to obey God, they should remember that their faithfulness would be tested. Sometimes the test may be very difficult.

King Xerxes honoured Haman the son of Hammedatha, by giving him a seat higher than the other nobles. The king ordered all the palace officials to honour Haman by kneeling down when he passed by. However, Mordecai refused to kneel down, nor pay him honour (**3:2**) because Haman’s promotion made him some kind of a godly being. This led Haman to plan to destroy all the Jews because of their faith in God (**3:5-6**). Was that a wise decision by Mordecai?

#### **2. Faithfulness to God Leads to Faithfulness to the Church (Esther 4:1-17)**

When Mordecai saw the law passed by the king to destroy all Jews in the kingdom, he and many other Jews fasted in sackcloth and ashes and cried allowed. When Queen Esther

heard of Mordecai's behaviour, she inquired about his problem. Mordecai gave the Queen the king's law and true to his selflessness, asked her to go to the king and plead for the Jews (he could have pleaded for his life alone). But the king had made a law that required anyone who went into the inner court of the palace without being called by him to be killed. The only exception would be if the king would extend his golden sceptre to the person entering. Since Esther could not go to the king at will, she instructed Mordecai and the Jews in the capital to fast for her. Their fasting was an expression of their trust in God and the hope that He would intervene for them. Queen Esther wanted to save her people, the Jews. This desire required that she risk her life.

### **3. God Rewards Those Who Are Faithful (Esther 6:4-14; 7:1-10; 8:1-2, 15)**

After their fast, Esther, in her royal clothes, went to see the king against the law. By God's grace the king extended his golden sceptre to her. She then invited the king and Haman to a banquet she had prepared. On the second day of the banquet, she made her plea on behalf of the Jews. What do you think happened? Let the class discuss.

These were the results of the faithfulness of Mordecai and Esther and the Jews' trust in God:

- a. Mordecai was honoured by the king (6:6-11)
- b. Haman was hanged on the gallows on which he was going to hang Mordecai (7:6-10)
- c. Mordecai was given the position of Haman the son of Hammedatha (8:1-2, 15)

Mordecai and Esther were faithful to both God and His people and God rewarded them.

### **4. Faithfulness to God Saved the Jews (Esther 5:1-2; 8:3-16; 9:1-4)**

Apart from the tangible rewards that may be given to leaders faithful to God and His people, what is more rewarding is that God answers their prayers and that their faithfulness also benefits their followers. For these Jews the benefits included: Esther's life was spared (5:1-2); a new law for the Jews to protect themselves was made (8:7-9); all the officials in the kingdom of king Xerxes helped the Jews (9:3-4) and the lives of the Jews were spared (9:2-4). When leaders are faithful to God they will be faithful to His people, the church, too. Because they choose to be on God's side they will receive His approval. It is better to be approved by God than by men.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. If someone you trusted lied to you about something important, what will it take for you to trust him or her again?
- b. What should come first for you as a leader: faithfulness to God or God's rewards?
- c. In what ways should Christian leaders be faithful to the church? Other believers? You?

#### **Conclusion:**

Challenge the members to ensure that they are faithful to themselves, to God, the family and the church. Take time to pray and ask the Lord to enable each one to be faithful to Him despite the cost.

## **THEME: A LEADER BUILDING LEADERS WHO CHANGE THE WORLD**

### **Lesson 26 - HUMILITY, THE MARK OF A LEADER**

**Scripture: Philippians 2:5-11; I Samuel 24:1-7**

**Other references: 1 Samuel 26:1-12; Philippians 4:15;**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Grasp the meaning of humility.
- b. Identify some of the examples of humble leaders.
- c. Desire to learn from these leaders, especially Jesus Christ.

**Memory Verse: Numbers 12:3**

*“Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

Most leaders are known because of the great things they did. But Moses, though a great leader in the history of Israel was known for his humility. The emphasis is not on what he did, but on his character because although humility is perceived as a weakness it is actually a strength. Moses was a humble person – “more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth”

**Introduction:**

*Please note: The word “leader” in this series is used for believers in general who are serving as leaders – formally or informally and even outside the church.*

*Start the session with the class discussing the meaning of humility and then share the following explanations.*

- a. Humility means to bring oneself under the control of God. One should be willing for God to do his will in and through him/her.
- b. It includes patience; that is longsuffering, steadfastness and endurance. It is the waiting of the believer through difficult times, circumstances and situations for God to fulfil his purposes in, through and by that person.
- c. It is to be gentle. It is a spirit of fairness and compassion. This spirit is to be shown to all people (**Philippians 4:5**).
- d. It is the attitude of exalting and praising others, especially God and Christ rather than oneself. Humility puts others first.

#### **1. The Examples of Leaders in the Bible**

At least three leaders stand out as examples of humility:

- a. King David is known for his suffering under the reign of King Saul.

- i. He was ordained as the new king of Israel, yet he put himself under the leadership of King Saul. He chose to spare Saul's life twice when he could have killed him in self-defence (**I Samuel 24:1-7; 26:1-12**)
- ii. He recognized Saul's kingship and subjected himself under his leadership.
- iii. He was patient, enduring those hard times while waiting for God's time for him to be king and when Israel would be ready for his leadership.
- b. Moses is a man known to be the most humble person who ever lived. The Bible says that he was more humble than anyone on earth during his life time (**Numbers 12:3**)
  - 1. He interceded for his persecutors many times.
  - 2. He allowed himself to be used by God under difficult circumstances.
  - 3. He showed much strength and endurance in places that he could have lost all hope about the future of the nation of Israel.
  - 4. He continued to wait for God, because of His faithfulness, to fulfil His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
  - 5. He was very patient and would not unnecessarily impose his authority upon the people he led.

What would you have done if you were the leader of Israel from Egypt to Canaan in the place of Moses?

- c. The last person to consider is Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour (**Philippians 2:5-11**)
  - i. He was fully God.
  - ii. He left heaven where he lacked nothing to become human.
  - iii. He left his glory to live a life of an ordinary person.
  - iv. He allowed himself to be used by God among the people who did not accept him.
  - v. He allowed himself to die a criminal's death to save sinners from their sin.

## **2. What are we supposed to do as leaders? (Philippians 2:5-8)**

- a. We should choose to have the attitude that Jesus Christ had.
- b. We should intentionally take steps to follow his example.
- c. We should be willing to pay the price of being humble. Proud leaders hurt those who follow them and may not be as effective as God wants them to be.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. Which meaning of humility stands out for you? Give at least one and the reason why.
- b. Which of the three examples of humility stands out for you? How can it be practically applied in our context?
- c. How is humility a mark of a leader? Let the class discuss.

### **Conclusion:**

Moses, David and the Lord Jesus Christ were marked by humility. Make a decision in your heart to learn from their examples, especially Jesus Christ. Close with prayer accepting the challenge to imitate Jesus' humility in all things.

## **THEME: A LEADER BUILDING LEADERS WHO CHANGE THE WORLD**

### **Lesson 27 - A COMMAND TO MENTOR NEW LEADERS**

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:1-7

**Other references:** John 14:12; 16:12-16; Philippians 4:8-9

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. See the need to learn from their leaders
- b. Understand that leaders have to be selected on merit
- c. Grasp the fact that leaders must mentor others if the institution will continue

**Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 2:2**

*“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

Leaders must be willing to mentor others, share information and not die with the knowledge they have received. As much as possible, all knowledge gained should be passed on to others who will also pass it on to others. That is what Paul did with Timothy and is instructing him to do. This was the example set by Jesus before He also instructed His followers to disciple their followers (**Matthew 28:19-20**). Knowledge is the power necessary for mentoring.

**Introduction:**

The continuity of any institution depends a lot on its ability to empower upcoming generations of leaders. In the same manner continuity of the Christian faith depends on the faithfulness of leaders to equip believers to become like Jesus Christ in every sphere of life. To lead a sinner to Christ is only the beginning. To make believers become followers of Christ should be the goal of every Christian leader. And to mentor them to become leaders should be just as important a goal.

#### **1. Leaders teach others formally and informally (2 Timothy 2:1-7; Philippians 4:8-9)**

- a. Paul taught Timothy formally, ‘what Timothy heard Paul say’ (**vs. 2**). Paul took time to teach Timothy and others. He planned to teach them. The challenge that leaders might have would be to intentionally plan to teach believers what they ought to know and what they ought to do. Paul challenges Timothy to intentionally teach others what he had been taught. This is a basic way of imparting knowledge to others.
- b. Paul taught the Philippians in two ways (**4:9**): formally and informally. He intentionally planned to teach them what they ought to know and do. They also learnt from him as he daily lived among them. It is a good thing to plan to teach believers

what they ought to know and do. However, the best way is to be an example of what the leader has taught them. The leader must practice what they preach and teach.

## **2. Leaders should be selected on merit (2 Timothy 2:2)**

- a. Leaders should be selected on merit (one's own conduct, abilities, deserving). Paul says that those entrusted with this treasure should be "reliable" people "who will also be qualified to teach others". This means that care should be taken in picking the ones to be entrusted to ensure that knowledge is imparted in order to enrich others. Leaders should not become knowledge bank or storage. They should be channels through which others are empowered.
- b. Jesus and Paul were leaders who emptied themselves in order to enrich those who followed them. Jesus gave all he knew until the disciples reached the limit of their understanding (**John 16:12**).

## **3. Leaders continue their task by teaching other leaders (2 Timothy 2:2; Philippians 4:8-9)**

Paul said that Timothy should teach leaders who would teach others (**2 Timothy 2:2**). A visionary leader thinks about the future. It is a person who is not bound by the present but uses the present to plan for the future. They want to see the future flourish more than the present. Therefore, they want followers to be better equipped than themselves so that the work will continue to grow stronger and wider. They work today with the future in mind.

This is what Jesus did with his disciples. In fact, he said, "**I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the father**" (**John 14:12**). Christian leaders should follow the example of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord – mentor others to become even greater leaders than they.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. What kind of a person should a Christian leader be?
- b. How should leaders be appointed or selected? Why?
- c. What are we doing to mentor others? What obstacles are hindering us from mentoring others? How can we overcome them?

### **Conclusion:**

Close this lesson by challenging the class to plan to intentionally impart their knowledge and mentor others. This is how we should influence others and empower them. This is what we are expected to do as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be servant leaders.

## **THEME: A LEADER BUILDING LEADERS WHO CHANGE THE WORLD**

### **Lesson 28 - THE ATTITUDE OF A LEADER WHO MENTORS OTHERS**

**Scripture: Acts 9:17-31**

**Other references: Acts 11:19-26; 13:13; 15:36-41 5:13**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realise that great leaders mentored others through patience and trust.
- b. Understand that leaders put the future of the church first before positions.
- c. Understand that leaders should be willing to work behind scenes and coach young leaders to take leadership.

**Memory Verse: Acts 9:27**

*“But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

If a well-known criminal were to change and become a believer in Christ, it would take much effort to convince even the most trusting believer of his or her conversion. That is what happened in Saul’s case. Barnabas, who listened to and believed Saul’s testimony, introduced him to the believers. Barnabas told them of Saul’s new relationship with Jesus Christ and other believers.

**Introduction:**

Saul met the Lord Jesus on his way to Damascus where he was going to arrest the followers of Jesus. He had authority from the high priest in Jerusalem. A light from heaven struck him and he fell to the ground blinded. Saul heard the Lord Jesus speaking to him in Aramaic, accusing him of persecuting Him. Then the Lord sent Saul to Damascus to be instructed about the faith he was persecuting. In Damascus the Lord Jesus sent Ananias to pray for Saul and to lead him in his new faith. When the Jews planned to kill him, the disciples helped him to escape from Damascus to Jerusalem where he would be among the apostles and other believers.

#### **1. Barnabas Trusted Saul (Acts 9:17-31; 11:19-26).**

In Jerusalem believers were afraid of Saul because he had been persecuting them. They did not know that he had changed to be a follower of Jesus Christ just like them. What was Saul going to do for them to at least listen to his story?

A man named Barnabas was brave enough to approach Saul and listen to his story. He believed Saul. Barnabas brought Saul to the believers although they were still afraid of him. He told them about Saul’s conversion and that he was now the preacher of the faith he once fought against. When the Jews in Jerusalem wanted to kill him because of his new faith, the Apostles sent him to his home town of Tarsus, in Asia Minor, Turkey. Here Saul was safe,



but there were no believers. Where could he find spiritual help without fellowship with believers?

A new church was planted in Antioch by evangelists. When the news reached the apostles in Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to find out about this new Gentile church. (Non-Jews are called Gentiles). Barnabas found this new young church alive. He helped disciple the believers. It grew. Then he thought of Saul who had no spiritual home. He sought Saul, found him in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch where he grew stronger among other believers. He disciplined Saul, worked with him among the believers and mentored him to be a leader with other church leaders in Antioch. Barnabas and Saul became the first foreign missionaries of the early church. They were successful in their mission.

## **2. Barnabas Was Patient with John mark (Acts 13:13; 15:36-41)**

Another young man who was mentored by Barnabas was John Mark, his own cousin. He went with Barnabas and Saul on their first journey to evangelise the Gentile world. When they arrived at Perga, a town in Asia Minor, Mark deserted them. On their second missionary journey Barnabas wanted to give Mark a second chance, but Saul did not approve of the plan. In fact, “they had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company” (vs. 39). Barnabas chose to give Mark a second chance. And that chance made him one of the great church leaders in the Early Church. Barnabas was patient with John Mark.

Barnabas was a leader who invested his life and energy in those who came after him. He had a vision of what they could be if given chance. He was willing to work behind scenes and coach younger people to take leadership. The two men he mentored are better known in the Bible and church history than he was. Are you willing to build?

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. Name two men who impacted the life of Saul. How did they impact his life?
- b. What role did Barnabas play in the life of John Mark?
- c. What could have happened to Mark if Barnabas had not done his part?
- d. What would hinder us from being leaders like Barnabas? How should we overcome?

### **Conclusion:**

Great leaders with God’s vision build leaders who will change the world. They are concerned about the future of the work than the security of their positions. Jesus built twelve leaders. Barnabas built at least two leaders we studied today. Who are you building?

## **THEME: A LEADER BUILDING LEADERS WHO CHANGE THE WORLD**

### **Lesson 29 - THE RESULTS OF TRAINING OTHERS**

**Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:9-13; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24; 1 Peter 5:13**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realise that great leaders are sometimes working behind the scenes.
- b. See that great leaders do not always emerge as leaders at the beginning.
- c. Understand that great leadership will impact the lives of many people.

**Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 4:11**

*“Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

John Mark was Barnabas’ cousin. He left Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey to Asia Minor. On their second missionary journey Paul refused to go with him since he had deserted them in Perga. Mark was later mentored by Barnabas and became a very helpful leader in the Church. Paul recognised him as an important partner in his ministry. This was because someone saw the potential in Mark and dared to mentor him for the ministry of the Gospel.

**Introduction:**

Barnabas was a quiet leader who built other leaders from behind the scene. He appears in three places in the book of Acts: First, when he sold his field and gave the total amount from the sale for the compassionate ministry in Jerusalem; second, when he introduced the apostle Paul (Saul) to the believers in Jerusalem; and third, when he was sent to Antioch to a new Gentile church. Here Barnabas introduced Paul to the ministry. And then he and Paul were sent out as the first missionaries to evangelise the Gentile world. In Antioch he broke company with Paul and mentored a young man called John Mark. Apart from these instances the New Testament is silent about him. Yet he is the one who built two leaders who enriched the church with fourteen books that form part of the New Testament. These leaders were Paul, who wrote thirteen books; and John Mark who wrote the Gospel according to Mark.

**1. John Mark was Beneficial to Paul (2 Timothy 4:9-13; Philemon 24)**

The apostle Paul failed to see the potential in the young man named John Mark. Paul was still inexperienced at the time. He was himself a young believer who could not see very far in the life of John Mark. It was only as he matured that he realised the need and importance of patience when working with those who are young both spiritually and physically. In his old age Paul finally acknowledged the importance of John Mark. He said, **“Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11).** In

the epistle to the Colossians, he speaks of John Mark as one of the two people who ministered to him while he was in prison when others had deserted him. John Mark is seen as a very courageous leader who left the easy life to minister to Paul while other young leaders left Paul when the going got tough. He had become very useful in the ministry of the Gospel. Mark continued the good work for which Barnabas invested in him.

## **2. John Mark Served with Apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:13)**

John Mark did not only work with the Apostle Paul, he also worked with the Apostle Peter. It seems that he stayed for many years in Rome where he served with both Paul and Peter. The other person who was with the Apostle Peter when he wrote his first epistle, was John Mark. Peter called him his son. One may wonder why he called Mark his son. John Mark was instrumental in writing the Gospel that Peter preached. Since the Apostle Peter was not good in Greek, it is believed that he might have asked John Mark to write his Gospel. That is why we have the Gospel according to Mark. This again, was the fruit of Barnabas' daring to build this young leader even when things seemed hopeless in the early days of his life.

## **3. The Apostle Paul (Saul) – missionary, author and theologian**

Another leader who was built by Barnabas was the Apostle Paul. Barnabas needed patience, courage and trust to help their former persecutor, Paul, in his new found faith. He also built him into a very important church leader and missionary of all time. What is more important is the theology (Christian faith) that he wrote in his thirteen epistles which is the foundation of the church today. Our Christian faith is better understood, taught and explained by the Apostle Paul than any other apostle. This is so because Barnabas dared to trust and invest in his former persecutor. The result was the most valuable writer and theologian (teacher and writer of the Christian faith).

It is what we leave behind in the lives of the leaders we have built that will last.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. What would the New Testament be without the epistles of the Apostle Paul?
- b. What would have happened if Barnabas had sought and protected his position in the church?
- c. How are you impacting the lives of others?

### **Conclusion:**

What kind of legacy are you going to leave when you die? Will it last for eternity? Are you busy with what God wants you to be or are you trying to make a name for yourself? Let us take time to think about this and to prayerfully and individually make a decision that will give God the glory and make us His true servants.

## **THEME: ASPIRING PASTORS – EFFECTIVE MINISTERS OF THE WORD**

### **Lesson 30 – The Lifestyle of the Minister of the Word of God**

**Scripture:** I Timothy 3:1-7

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Understand that the pastor ministers through his/her lifestyle.
- b. Realise that the pastor's family is his/her first responsibility in the church.
- c. Understand that the pastor must have a good reputation with outsiders.

**Memory Verse: I Timothy 3:4**

*“He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

The pastor has to learn to lead his/her family well in order for him/her to lead the church of God. He/she should earn the respect of his family in order to be respected by the church.

**Introduction:**

*Please note: The one aspiring to be a pastor need to prepare his/her mind before undertaking this task. And the believers surrounding the aspiring pastors need to be in much prayer for them even as they consider the task before them (1 Timothy 3:1).*

*Timothy's learning from Paul is a good example for an aspiring pastor.*

*As much as possible, think of a night without stars – total darkness without the beauty of their shining individually and together. Discuss.* The lifestyle of the minister of the Word of God is like one of God's shining stars in the universe. With this lifestyle, God wants to reveal himself to those in the darkness of sin. This happens through the pastor demonstrating the truths he/she is preaching and teaching. It is therefore important for the pastor to always remember that he/she ministers the Word of God even through his/her lifestyle.

#### **1. The Pastor and His or Her Lifestyle (1 Timothy 3:2-3)**

In these two verses the Apostle Paul puts the character of the pastor first. He uses the word 'MUST' to emphasize the importance of the character of the pastor. The pastor must be:

- a. Above reproach: praise-worthy, blameless, i.e. no true accusations against him.
- b. Faithful to his/her spouse: controls his/her sexual desires.
- c. A Responsible parent: respected and obeyed by his/her children
- d. Self-controlled: self-disciplined, able to restrain oneself.
- e. Respectable: well thought of, upright
- f. Welcoming to visitors.

- g. Gentle: kind, tender and peaceful
- h. Not a lover of money: lover of riches or wealth. Should not put money first in his/her life. God and His will should be first in the pastor's life.

The pastor's behavior is the one weapon that will make him/her succeed in the ministry of Christ as God wants him/her to.

## **2. The Pastor Manages His or her Family Well (1 Timothy 3:4-5)**

The first members of the church who better knows the pastor are his/her own household. If the pastor fails to demonstrate and teach obedience and respect in the family, he/she will fail to gain respect from his/her spouse and children. Then, it will be difficult to be respected by the church he/she is pastoring. Whatever the pastor preaches, he/she must live at home. The pastor's home is where he/she puts into practice all the sermons and lessons preached or taught in the church.

The pastor's home is also a testing ground for his/her management skills. However, to “**see that his children obey him with proper respect**” (vs. 4), does not imply that the children must or will be saved even though their salvation is much desired. The pastor's success in this area is proof of their ability to manage.

## **3. The Community Respects the Pastor (1 Timothy 3:6-7)**

The work of the pastor includes people outside the church – the community and the society. This is the field that needs to be harvested for the kingdom. It is a house that needs the light that the church holds. It is the food that needs to be salted. If the community does not respect the pastor how will he/she and the church have any influence on the outsiders? Surely, they will not be able to have any impact. The lifestyle of the pastor in the community is a tool that God will use to draw people to Himself.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. What role does the character of the pastor play in the local church?
- b. How influential is the household of the pastor to his/her ministry in the church?
- c. Can the church minister in the community if they have no respect for the pastor?
- d. How would you respond if people said this about you: “If this pastor will go to heaven, we will too”.

### **Conclusion:**

As members of the local church, we have a responsibility to seriously pray for aspiring pastors. The future and the impact of the church in the community depend on the effectiveness of these pastors. Let us plan to regularly and earnestly pray for them even as they consider these things.

## **THEME: ASPIRING PASTORS – EFFECTIVE MINISTERS OF THE WORD**

### **Lesson 31 - INTERPRETING OF THE WORD OF TRUTH**

**Scripture:** II Timothy 2:14-19; I Corinthians 9:24-27

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realise that the character of the preacher must be acceptable to God
- b. Understand that the preacher of the Word of God must work hard to interpret the Word.
- c. Realise that the preacher must interpret the Word in the correct way

**Memory Verse:** II Timothy 2:15

*“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth”.*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

The minister of the Word of God must make every effort: 1) for his/her character to be approved by God on the judgement day; and 2) to be able to interpret the Word of God correctly.

**Introduction:**

*What do the athletes do in order to win in a race? Discuss.* These should include training, food, rest, obeying instructions, clothes, etc. *Why do they have to adhere to these directives? Discuss.*

#### **1. The Pastor’s Responsibility to Himself (I Corinthians 9:24-27; II Timothy 2:15)**

The major task of the pastor is to make himself acceptable to God and to be qualified for heaven.

- a. The pastor must be temperate (**I Corinthians 9:25**). That is his/her responsibility as a minister in God’s ministry. The word temperate means to be self-controlled, moderate and peaceable. It is the responsibility of the pastor to practice these things. God will not cause him/her to become these things, but will only enable the pastor by the Holy Spirit and give opportunities for him/her to practice.
- b. The pastor must be certain of his/her aim (**I Corinthians 9:26-27**). The word ‘certain’ means to be sure, definite and convinced. The pastor must be sure and convinced of his aim or purpose in life and in the ministry. He cannot try to be everything in life. He must be what God wants him/her to be. It is his/her responsibility to find out and be certain.
- c. The pastor must be what God wants him/her to be (**II Timothy 2:15**). The word ‘approved’ speaks of a stone that is cut, tested and fit to be placed where it belongs in a building. It is the task of the stone masons to cut the stone to size and shape so that it will fit. The task of the builders is to put the suitable stone in its place in the building. So it is with the pastor. Like the mason, the pastor has to make himself fit

for God and the ministry through strict discipline as God, the Master-builder requires.

## **2. The Pastor's Responsibility in Interpreting the Word of Truth (II Tim 2:14-18)**

The pastor must strive to:

- a. Avoid Pointless Arguments (**vs. 14**). Where there is quarrelling there are arguments and unnecessary disagreements. What do these do to those who are listening? The Apostle Paul says that they **“ruin those who listen”**. Many times arguments tend to please the perpetrators while they last but are usually followed by regrets and heartaches. The pastor must understand that his/her task is to interpret the Word and not to win arguments. The pastor's purpose and focus in life is to build the believers.
- b. Avoid Godless Chatter (**vss. 16-18**). The word 'chatter' means talk, conversation or gossip. Many times this talk has no purpose. The pastor needs to remember what his/her purpose in life is. The conversations that he indulges in should bring life to those around him/her. This is even more so when he/she is preaching or teaching. He/She must always think of the effects of his/her words in the lives of the people who are listening.
- c. Correctly interpret the Word of Truth (**vs. 15**). The only way to avoid pointless arguments and godless chatter is by interpreting the Word of Truth correctly. The word 'correctly' means properly, appropriately or fittingly. This means that the Word must be correctly understood within its context. It should not be manipulated to support our good thoughts. It should not be used as proof text, i.e. using a verse out of its context, thus changing its meaning from when it was originally written. Believers must be able to find the message that was preached or taught when they later read the passage on their own. This process helps the pastor, and the believers in turn, to better understand the Word of God. The heart and mind will be filled with the Word that is correctly interpreted and flowing out through life and conversations. Thus the pastor needs to major in correctly interpreting the Word of Truth in order to be effective.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. According to this lesson, what are the responsibilities of the pastor to him/herself?
- b. Also, what are the things the pastor must avoid? Why?
- c. Why is it important to always interpret the Word of Truth correctly?

### **Conclusion:**

Since it is the responsibility of the pastor to always guard himself and to interpret the Word of Truth correctly, aspiring pastors will do well to seriously pray and consider this responsibility. It is also the responsibility of the congregation to pray for the aspiring pastors so that God may help them as they prepare their minds for the task before them. Make a circle around aspiring pastors in your midst and pray for them. If there are none, make a circle and in the centre put a few chairs or some volunteers to represent aspiring pastors and earnestly pray that the Lord will call some even from your church.

## **THEME: ASPIRING PASTORS – EFFECTIVE MINISTERS OF THE WORD**

### **LESSON 32 - *THE BUILDING MINISTRY OF THE PASTOR***

**Scripture: II Timothy 4:1-5**

**Other references: Titus 2:1-15**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Understand the responsibility of preaching in the local church.
- b. Realise the scope of the preaching ministry of the pastor.
- c. Sense some excitement about the task as an aspiring pastor

**Memory Verse: II Timothy 4:2**

*“Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

The verse shows the multi-facet preaching ministry of the pastor – correct, rebuke, encourage and careful instruction. This four-pronged ministry should result in well-rounded mature members.

**Introduction:**

One of the pastor’s joys in the local church is the preaching ministry. It is a responsibility that requires the pastor to never take the pulpit lightly because it has eternal consequences for both the preacher/teacher and the listeners. That is why Paul says, **“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge”** (vs. 1). The word ‘charge’ means a ‘command’. The pastor has no choice but to obey God and the Lord Christ. And what a joy it is – to speak on behalf of God who knows exactly what needs to be said, when and to whom.

#### **1. The Preaching Responsibilities of the Pastor, II Timothy 4:2.**

To be effective as a minister of the Word of God:

- a. The Pastor Must Preach the Word. To preach the Word means to:
  - i. Expound the Word. In expounding the Word, the pastor needs to explain the words used in the passage so that the congregants understand them. Illustrations, if used appropriately, are helpful.
  - ii. Persuade the congregants. Preaching must convince the congregants of the truth that is being proclaimed and guide them to make decisions that will help them live in accordance with the message.
  - iii. Urgency. The message must burn on the pastor’s heart because it is important and pressing and requires that a positive decision be made. Preaching should not be just another activity to while away time or to merely fill in an item on a program.



- b. The Pastor must rebuke. This may include:
  - i. To reprove. To confront those who sin or do what is wrong. It includes criticizing constructively. The purpose of rebuking is to correct the wayward congregants and to lead them back to the right way.
  - ii. To reprimand. Involves scolding the congregants in love with the purpose of building them.

This may probably be one of the most difficult but necessary part of the ministry. It is therefore, important for the pastor to create an environment that will make these processes easier.
- c. The Pastor must encourage. This means to inspire and to assure the congregants as they walk in their Christian life through preaching. There are times of discouragement and difficulties in life. There are times of testing and challenges on the way. The message from the pastor should be sensitive to where the congregants are and provide the encouragement needed to keep on going.
- d. To instruct. One of the things needed in the church is preaching-teaching. This is the kind of preaching that seeks to teach the congregants. It targets both the heart and the mind and not only the heart. Thus it helps the congregants to think and gain knowledge while being moved to make decisions for right living. It is part of the teaching ministry of the pastor that will bring about maturity in the membership of the church.
  - i. The question might be asked, ‘How will the pastor instruct the congregants?’ The pastor is to instruct carefully (**vs. 2**). This requires wisdom from God, caution, being alert and sensible. The pastor is dealing with people who, in some ways may be more educated and wiser than he is, and yet they are God’s flock that he/she must be feed.
  - ii. Preaching-teaching lays a good foundation for further instruction of the various groups (according to age and/or common interest) in the church so they each will know how to conduct themselves and respond to life (**Titus 2:1-15**). This is another important part of the pastor’s task to instruct.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. What is the scope of the preaching ministry of the pastor?
- b. How is preaching the Word of the pastor related to the end time judgement of Christ?
- c. In the light of this lesson what should the attitude of the congregation be to the pastor?

### **Conclusion:**

Having realised the eternal implications of the pastor’s task, challenge the learners to plan to take time each week to pray for aspiring pastors and their families as they prepare themselves to serve God, and in particular through preaching and teaching. If you have names of aspiring pastors, put them up so you may take time today to earnestly pray for them and their families. Have learners pick a name or two as they commit to pray for them.

## **THEME: THE CHRISTIAN HOME – A NURSERY OF HOLINESS CHAMPIONS**

### **Lesson 33 - THE HOME – A PLACE TO BREED HOLINESS CHAMPIONS**

**Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

**Other References: Genesis 18:16-19; Ephesians 6:4**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. Realise God’s requirements that make a home a nursery of holiness champions
2. Find ways to make their homes nurseries of holiness

**Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 6:6-7a**

*“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children”*

**Explanation of the Memory verse:**

When people love one another, even as friends, they tend to think and talk more about each other. It is usually said that the person one loves, who now seem to have so much control over them, is on their hearts. God’s desire is that His people will, in the same way, have His commandments upon their hearts, be controlled by them and impress them on others.

**Introduction:**

*What comes to mind when you think about a nursery? Give time for responses. The idea we want to use for our lesson is that of a place where trees, shrubs and flowering plants are raised from seed. In this sense, one may think of a garden or field as a sample of a nursery. What things should one think of to have a productive nursery? Discuss.*

The place we want to think of as a nursery for holiness champions is the Christian home. *What kind of people are champions? What is it that people like about champions? What would life be like without them? What do they do that make them champions?*

God is calling Christians to be champions or models of His holy course. In the same way that people think and plan for nurseries, God desires that Christians make their homes a place where people can grow according to His commandments and become holiness champions. Our lesson is about practical things that can help Christian homes become nurseries of holiness champions.

**1. Ingredients that make a home a nursery of holiness champions (Deut. 6:1-7a)**

- b. **Obedience:** God must be obeyed (vss. 2, 3, 6). This Scripture is part of Moses’ explanation of God’s commandments with the Ten Commandments as the main theme. The emphasis is that God can only be honoured if His people will keep His commandments all of their lives and teach them from generation to generation. To keep God’s commandments is more than mentally knowing them. Therefore, an attitude of obedience to God must be demonstrated and taught in the home.

- c. **A personal relationship with God.** This is necessary for genuine obedience. The relationship should be founded on knowing who God is. It should acknowledge that He is one and there is no other (**vs. 4**). Undivided love for God and His commandments upon one's heart should characterise this relationship (**vs. 5, 6**).
  - d. **An intentional passing on to the next generation.** God's commandments that are upon the heart must be passed on to the children by all means possible (**vs. 7a**). It is important to note that from the individual's relationship with God, attention is given to the family. This shows that the family and the home are God's basic building block of society. It also shows that the benefits of one's relationship with God must impact the family first.
- 2. God's action-plan to make the home a nursery of holiness champions (Deut 6:6-7)**
- a. God's commandments upon the heart must be seen in the daily activities of life (**6**).
  - b. The verbs talk, tie, bind and write (**v. 7b-9**) show that these activities must be intentionally planned to impress the commandments of God on the children (and others):
    - i. Talking. Allow conversations to be influenced by the purpose to impress God's commandments. As people see and hear what and how one does things, they should ask questions. The answers will help them understand God and His expectations.
    - ii. Symbols: "...**To tie, ... to bind ... to write them ...**", refer to opportunities for lessons through objects, practices and traditions around the home designed to impress God's Word on the members. They should raise one's curiosity and simple but appropriate answers should be given.
  - c. Therefore, the home as a nursery, requires planning to determine what, why, who, when, where and how of our activities. It calls for consistency and perseverance as we carry out the plan. The results will be as said in **verse 2**: we, our children and their children will fear the Lord as long as we live.

**Discussion Question:**

1. What challenges would believers come across as they make their homes nurseries?
2. Choose a symbol that is common to Christian families today. Use the questions what, why, who, when, where and how to evaluate how it impresses God's commandments on the children. Do more than one if time allows.

**Conclusion**

Challenge the learners to prayerfully evaluate their homes during this week in the light of the lesson today. Encourage them to even follow the example of 2 above. Close the session with prayer for each home represented in the class.

## **THEME: THE CHRISTIAN HOME – A NURSERY OF HOLINESS CHAMPIONS**

### **Lesson 34 - THE HOME – A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN ARE VALUED**

**Scripture: Psalm 127:3-5; James 1:26-27**

**Other references: Psalm 127; Mark 10:13-16; Genesis 1:27-28**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. Unconditionally accept and value children as God does
2. Seek to show this acceptance towards all children

**Memory Verse: Psalm 127:3**

*“Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him”*

#### **Explanation of the Memory verse:**

Inheritance and rewards are desired by all and highly valued by those who receive them. God values children as a heritage and a reward. He thus set an example of how we must value children. This is not to suggest that children may be used for the parents' benefit. But they must be brought up for the Lord. They are a heritage and a reward from the Lord and for the Lord first and for those receiving them.

#### **Introduction:**

If the Christian home is a nursery of holiness champions, who are these champions? When we think about growth in the home, we see children as the primary focus of nurture. However, other members are expected to benefit and grow too. Children are mostly valued to propagate human species and to promote family values. God also desires that children become holiness champions. It therefore makes sense that we first seek to understand God's ideal for children.

#### **1. Children, a Heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3a)**

Children are a heritage. The value of a heritage may be explained in terms of Israel inheriting the land of Canaan. After fighting and overcoming the Canaanites on their behalf, God gave the land to the Israelites. Each tribe received its land by lot and they were not to trade, exchange or give it away. They were to keep, use and protect it according to God's instructions. It was their heritage from God for life and they could neither be careless nor negligent about it. Children are a heritage from the Lord and must be valued although unlike property they cannot be used.

#### **2. Children, a Reward from the Lord (Psalm 127:3b)**

They are a reward from the Lord. A reward is something that is given for either a good or a bad act. However, with regards to children, their being a reward should be understood first

and foremost according to God's blessing at creation (Genesis 1:28). They are a reward, not for a good or bad act, to the parents (ideally husband and wife). They are a blessing from God.

### **3. Children beyond our borders**

- a. **God's Care Includes Orphans (James 1:26-27):** What about the orphans and the fatherless? In many places the Scriptures reveal God's heart towards the orphans and the fatherless. But, James 1:27 shows that religion that is acceptable to God includes looking "after orphans and widows in their distress". Children who are orphans are included among the needy. They need our mercy and compassion because they are the most weak, defenceless and helpless of all children and God's heart goes out to them. He desires to create the best possible world for them too. Should these children be considered as our heritage and reward beyond our biological children?
- b. **Other Children in Our Midst:** In our day and age the word "orphan" may be expanded to include other children at risk (in danger). The list may include those born out of wedlock, due to rape, abandoned, left alone or under the care of "strangers" for long periods of time, etc. Their circumstances require that somebody else other than and/or alongside the parent or guardian take responsibility for them. Thus every adult living or spending any large amount of time with children should value and receive them as God's heritage and reward.

Jesus Christ who is our model, shows that God values all children and they are precious to Him (**Mark 10:13-16**). Therefore, all the children around us must be valued and unconditionally accepted as a heritage and a reward from the Lord.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. In what ways can adults show that they value and unconditionally accept children as God does?
2. In what ways will lack of unconditional acceptance of all children hinder efforts to make them holiness champions?
3. How can orphans and other children at risk be nurtured to become holiness champions?

### **Conclusion**

Unless children are valued and accepted as God values them, they will not be effectively nurtured to become holiness champions. Challenge the class to intentionally monitor their relationships with all children in their midst during the week and find ways to improve them. Close with prayer for wisdom to develop relationships that value children as God does.

## **THEME: THE CHRISTIAN HOME – A NURSERY OF HOLINESS CHAMPIONS**

### **Lesson 35 - LIVING DAILY AS CHAMPIONS OF HOLINESS IN THE HOME**

**Scripture: Ephesians 5:8-14**

**Other references: Ephesians 4:17 – 5:20**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. Strive to be champions of holiness in their daily lives
2. Intentionally pursue righteousness and holiness

**Memory Verse: Ephesians 5:8,10**

*“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ... and find out what pleases the Lord”.*

**Explanation of the Memory verse:**

Can you think of a day when you were confused because you did not know whether it was day or night? Darkness and light are so different from each other that they can never be confused. They cannot exist together at the same time in the same way that day and night cannot. And this is how our life should be as children of God. We lived as darkness before we came to know the Lord but now we must live as light as we strive to please the Lord in all things.

**Introduction:**

Thinking about our daily life as holiness champions and its impact on others, it helps to think in terms of light and darkness. What would happen if in real life darkness and light could not be separated? Discuss briefly.

Divide the class into three or more. Assign each group a Scripture passage from the following: **Ephesians 4:17-19; Ephesians 5:3-14** and **Ephesians 4:25-32**. Give a few minutes for each group to read, classify and list the actions found in their passage. As each passage is being discussed during class, have each group read their findings.

#### **1. Break clear with evil practices (Ephesians 4:17-19; 5:3-14)**

- a. Paul, after he had stated what the Ephesians were as the church (chapters 1-3), gave no option as to how they ought to live. Mark the words that he used to begin this section, **“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord ...” (4:17a)**. Not only did he tell them but he also insisted on it in the Lord and thus gave them no option.
- b. The instruction was that they **“must no longer live as the Gentiles do” (4:17a)**:
  - i. In attitude – **(4:17-19)**.
  - ii. In actions and in words – **(5:3-7)**.

iii. The new life in Christ must be as different from the previous one as darkness is from light (**5:8-14**). This means that others, including unbelievers, must see the difference.

## **2. Put off the old self ... put on the new self (Ephesians 4:20-24)**

- a. To truly break away from the sinful life requires that one uphold what they know about Christ and continue to learn from Him (**vss. 20-21**).
- b. It also requires a decisive moment **“to put off the old self ... and to put on the new self”** (**vss. 22-24**). Just as one may not gradually take off clothing once they decide to have it changed, so is the putting off of the old and the putting on of the new self. This is one of the metaphors used to explain the moment of being entirely sanctified. It involves totally yielding oneself to God in order to be cleansed and filled by the Holy Spirit.
- c. The old self must be taken off because it is **“being corrupted by its deceitful desires”** (**vs. 22**) and will hinder one’s ability to imitate Christ.
- d. The new self must be put on because it is **“created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness”** (**vs. 24**). It becomes a more fertile ground for one to grow in attaining a godly character and conduct.

## **3. Grow in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:25-32)**

Paul gave specific examples to demonstrate intentional growth in righteousness and holiness. It shows that to repent is not just about turning from evil and stopping to sin. But the one who has repented must continue to move in the direction opposite to sin towards Christ-likeness. Some of the examples he gave include: turning from falsehood towards truthfulness (**vs. 25**); from anger towards forgiveness (**vss. 26-27, 31-32**); from stealing towards generosity (**vs. 28**); from unwholesome talk towards edifying talk (**vs. 29; 5:4, 6, 19-20**); from grieving the Spirit towards pleasing Him (**vs. 30**).

### **Discussion Question:**

1. What practices should believers seek to break clear of in their homes?
2. How would daily living as champions of holiness in the home change the image of the church in your area?

### **Conclusion**

To live daily as holiness champions, believers must break clear of evil practices, be entirely sanctified and grow in righteousness and holiness. Challenge the learners to evaluate themselves and make plans to monitor specific areas for growth during the week. Encourage them to pray about sharing their progress (no matter how small) with the class to help keep them accountable. Close the session with prayer for each learner to strive to be a champion of holiness in the home.

## **THEME: THE CHRISTIAN HOME – A NURSERY OF HOLINESS CHAMPIONS**

### **Lesson 36 - FULFILLING ROLES AS HOLINESS CHAMPIONS IN THE HOME**

**Scripture: Ephesians 5:25-33**

**Other references: Ephesians 5:22 – 6:9**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. Embrace God’s instructions for relationships in the home as not negotiable
2. Realize that these instructions are the basics of all human relationships
3. Realize that they can only be learned as they are demonstrated in the family

**Memory Verse: Ephesians 5:21**

*“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ”*

#### **Explanation of the Memory verse:**

Imagine a world without submission! *Allow learners to respond.* Paul in closing the general section of his exhortation to live as children of light, he simply gives the instruction to submit to one another as unto Christ. This indicates that submission is the hinge on which successful and healthy relationships hang. That is why submission is still important even today. The position of verse 21 between the general instructions and those for the family shows that mutual submission in the family is the foundation of the relationships in the home.

#### **Introduction:**

It is said that the strength of the Jewish homes depends on their determination to live according to God’s instructions. Members are expected to keep their roles and responsibilities in the home. In this way family members learn and exemplify their roles from generation to generation. Paul, in accordance to this mindset, gave God’s directives for the family. And, unless these roles are learned in the home, they may never be learned anywhere else. Thus being a holiness champion requires that one fulfils their role and responsibilities in the home.

#### **1. Wives must submit to their husbands (vs. 22-24)**

**“... as to the Lord” (vs. 22)** is the measure of submission to be attained for husband. This in no way implies that the wife is inferior. But, God in His wisdom has given the leadership of the home to the husband **“... as Christ is the head of the church” (vs. 23)**. There are also no qualifications regarding the husband to be submitted to. The wife is not forced to submit but in love and respect she chooses to submit just as she does to Christ **(vs. 24)**. The Lord engages wives as individuals with a freewill, and with creative and intellectual abilities. He respects their decisions and gently leads them in His will, as He does the husbands.



## **2. Husbands must love their wives (vs. 25-33)**

“... as Christ loved the church ...” (vs. 25) is the measure of love to be attained for the wife. It is a self-giving love that seeks to do the best for the wife in order to bring out the best in her. Christ gave Himself to make the church holy.

## **3. Children must honour their parents (6:1-3)**

Obedience to parents is the children’s obligation to Christ. No qualification has been given for the parent to be obeyed. Therefore, children who are believers must obey and honour their parents whether they are believers or not as a sign of their commitment to Christ. Unless they obey and honour their parents they will not be able to obey other adults or authorities. Therefore, parents should strive to teach their children to obey from an early age. Children whose parents are not believers need the support and guidance of the church and responsible church members.

## **4. Parents must nurture and instruct children for the Lord (6:4)**

Parents are to nurture and instruct children for the Lord as opposed to provoking them. While this instruction is applicable to both parents, it is important that fathers take note that it is directed at them. Fathers must consider taking more responsibility in the upbringing of their children. Shared responsibility will help ensure a more balanced society.

## **5. Submission and mutual respect in the workplace (6:5-9)**

Outside the home, the workplace or school is the next place where people spend most of their time. Therefore, even though Paul talks about the workplace, these instructions apply well to relationships between authorities and subordinates. Obedience and whole-hearted service or involvement as unto the Lord is required of the subordinates. Authorities must be respectful and kind but firm in the fear of the Lord. Schools and workplace are some of the first testing grounds of the values learned from home.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How does mutual submission help keep healthy family relationships?
2. What makes it difficult for families to be mutually submissive?
3. How will following these instructions impact our lives, homes and communities?

### **Conclusion**

Unless Christians as champions of holiness strive to live up to God’s requirements of our roles and responsibilities in the home, no one else will. We will only have ourselves to blame for chaos, disorder and disrespect for family and marriage in our society. May God help us champion the course of holiness by following His instructions. Close in a prayer of commitment for all to be champions of holiness who are faithful in their specific roles and responsibilities in the home.

## **THEME: EXPERIENCING A REAL MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **Lesson 37 - THE PROMISED HOLY SPIRIT**

**Scripture: John 14:15-27**

**Other references: John 8:42-47; 14:15-27; 16:5-17**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Explain who the Holy Spirit is.
- b. Identify those who had been promised the Holy Spirit
- c. Understand the purpose for which the Holy Spirit is Given

**Memory Verse: John 15:26**

*“When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send from the father, the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the father, he will testify about me.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. The Holy Spirit comes from the Father who is in heaven. His main work is to testify about Jesus because He has come to represent Jesus in and through the lives of believers.

**Introduction:**

A perfect vehicle, without petrol, cannot perform its responsibilities. This is so true with a believer who is not filled with the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. It is important for us to understand who the Holy Spirit is and what He does in the lives of believers.

#### **1. Who is the Holy Spirit?**

The Holy Spirit is called the **Counsellor (14:16)**. As the counsellor, He is the advocate for believers. He represents believers to their heavenly Father and prays for them. As the counsellor, He also advises believers in their daily walk with the Savior.

The Holy Spirit is called the **Spirit of Truth (16:17)**. This speaks of His nature. He cannot tell lies. It also speaks about those who are filled by the Holy Spirit because they, too, cannot tell lies. They will tell the truth because the Spirit of Truth lives in them. The Holy Spirit imparts his nature to those He possesses. They become the agents of truth.

Remember that Jesus said that those who tell lies are the children of Satan who is the father of lies (**John 8:42-47**). This means that lying is the nature of Satan just as truth is the nature of the Holy Spirit. Those who believe in Jesus Christ must be filled with the Spirit of Truth so that he can guide them into all truth (**16:13**).

The Holy Spirit **Represents Jesus** in the lives of all believers (**John 14:18, 28**). When a person receives Jesus as his personal Savior, the Holy Spirit comes into the life of that

person in the place of Jesus. While in the life of this person, the Holy Spirit does everything Jesus tells him to do. All what the Holy Spirit is to a believer is what Jesus Christ is in the believer's life. We talk about Jesus being in our hearts; that is the presence of the Holy Spirit who represents Him.

What is more remarkable is that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer includes the presence of our heavenly Father too. Jesus said that He and the Father would come into that believer and make their home with him (**16:23**). So the presence of the Holy Spirit in a believer brings the whole Triune-God in him. This is inexplicable and yet it is true. If God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit live in you as a believer, who would defeat or bewitch you?

## **2. To Whom Is the Holy Spirit Promised? (John 14:15, 23).**

The Holy Spirit is promised to those who love and obey Jesus Christ. Love for Jesus can be seen in obeying Him in all that He commands. The one who loves Jesus will always choose to do the will of Jesus. This means that to love and to obey Jesus are directly connected.

## **3. Why Is the Holy Spirit Given To Believers? (John 16:8-11, 13, 14)**

The Holy Spirit is given to believers in order:

- a. To convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement (**vss. 8-11**). The one who convicts sinners of sin is the Holy Spirit. The lifestyle and testimonies of believers, and the message preached by the preacher are some of the things the Holy Spirit uses to convict.
- b. To guide believers into all truth (**vs. 13**). The only person who guides believers and shows what is the truth or lies is the Holy Spirit. He knows everything.
- c. To bring glory to Jesus Christ (**vs. 14**). The Holy Spirit always wants to glorify the Lord Jesus. A believer filled with the Holy Spirit will always give glory to the Lord Jesus rather than seek praise for him- or her-self.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. Who is the Holy Spirit according to this lesson? Give and explain His names.
- b. Who qualifies to receive the Holy Spirit according to the lesson? Discuss.
- c. Why is the Holy Spirit given to believers according to the lesson today? Explain.

### **Conclusion:**

This will be the right time to encourage the class to look into their lives if they are living in obedience as a sign of their love for Jesus. Encourage them to ask the Father to give them the Holy Spirit. Make it a special time for them to talk to their heavenly Father.

## **THEME: EXPERIENCING A REAL MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **LESSON 38 - WHEN BELIEVERS ARE FILLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**Scripture: Acts 2:1-13**

**Other references: Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-47**

**Memory Verse: Acts 2:18**

*“Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”*

#### **Explanation of the memory verse:**

The plan of God about every believer is that he or she will be filled with the Holy Spirit. This means that being filled with the Holy Spirit is not for certain people but for all believers. Every believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit for the specific purpose of prophesying (speaking on God’s behalf).

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Appreciate that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is for all believers.
- b. Realise that non-believers recognized those who were filled by the Holy Spirit.
- c. Understand that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will influence their communities for Christ.

#### **Introduction:**

What will happen if a bottle store is built near your church building? Let the class discuss how this would affect the area around the church building, the believers and the whole community. Let them also give the reasons why their area would be affected that way! Then ask this question: what will happen if we as believer were filled with the Holy Spirit? Let the class discuss.

#### **1. When the Holy Spirit Filled the Believers (Acts 1:4-14; 2:1-4)**

- a. They had been waiting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:4, 5**). The disciples believed what Jesus said and literally waited for the Holy Spirit to come and fill them.
- b. They were constant in prayer (**Acts 1:12-14**). While waiting, they prayed constantly for ten days. They spoke to their heavenly Father continuously till the Holy Spirit came. That was a period of ten days. This showed their commitment and obedience to Jesus, their desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit and their readiness to be witnesses for Jesus.
- c. They were together in one place (**Acts 2:1**). They pray in one place. They were united in their purpose. They continued till the promise was fulfilled to them. There were 120 of them including women (**1:14, 15**).

- d. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:4**). The Holy Spirit took charge of their lives and their future and used them as He wanted. And because they were all under He would.
- e. This occasion was also marked with short-lived spectacular signs. But the disciples, under the leadership and control of the Holy Spirit, continued to impact their world as never before. And what an impact they made!

**2. What Happened to the Disciples Impacted their Community (Acts 2:5-47)**

- a. The people in Jerusalem realized that something had happened in the lives of the about 120 followers of Jesus Christ (**vss. 5-13**).
  - i. The crowd noted that the disciples, though Galileans spoke in languages the crowd could understand. Something that was unusual.
  - ii. The crowd heard the disciples declaring the wonders of God. The disciples' message was clear.
  - iii. The crowd wanted to know more about what had happened.
- b. The disciples responded to the curiosity of the crowd (**vss. 14-39**).
  - i. Peter responded and explained what had happened to the disciples.
  - ii. He proclaimed the Good News about Jesus Christ.
  - iii. He showed them how they could be saved and be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- c. The outcome was unbelievable (**vss. 40-47**).
  - i. About 3000 people were converted to the Lord Jesus.
  - ii. Follow-up classes for the new converts were started
  - iii. Fellowship and prayer meetings were conducted everyday.

The New Testament church was born with the coming of the Holy Spirit. It grew as new converts were taught about their new faith. It was sustained with prayer, fellowship and compassion – thus the growing disciples' needs were met. What can we learn from them?

**Discussion Questions:**

- a. Let the class discuss what need to be done for every member to be a Spirit-filled believer. What did the disciples do according to this lesson?
- b. Discuss what caught the attention of the people in Jerusalem. Note two things.
- c. Discuss the plan that the disciples made to continue the impact in Jerusalem.
- d. What was the role of the Holy Spirit in all of these happenings?

**Conclusion:**

Have the learners been filled with the Holy Spirit since they believed? This is a time to lead those in the class who want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Take time to pray with them. You might want to have the pastor to be in the class to help explain and pray with them.

## **THEME: EXPERIENCING A REAL MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **LESSON 39 – The Spirit-Filled Believer’s Attitude in Persecutions**

**Scripture: Acts 4:23-36**

**Other references: Acts 4:1-36; 2:42-47**

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Identify the attitude and sense the spirit of Peter and John in the Jewish court.
- b. Observe the spirit with which the church prayed for the apostles.
- c. Willingly participate in compassionate ministry in the local church.

**Memory Verse: Acts 4:29**

*“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through your holy servant Jesus.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

The prayer showed their confidence in God, anticipation to preach the Word and for God to perform miracles through Jesus Christ. It focused on what needed to be done to benefit people and bring them into the kingdom of God. They expressed no bitterness against their enemies.

**Introduction:**

In some parts of India Christians are not allowed to preach to Hindus. If found converting a Hindu to Christianity, they could be beaten or killed. In some places church buildings are burned up and pastors are beaten. What should the believers respond to such difficult situations? Discuss. The disciples of Jesus Christ were persecuted because they preached, taught and healed people in the name of Jesus.

#### **1. Spirit-filled Believers Obey God Rather Than Men (Acts 4:8-20).**

After Peter and John had healed the crippled man who was forty years old, they were brought to the Jewish Council. This was the council that sentenced Jesus to be crucified. There was a possibility of a death sentence for them. How were they to respond to the council?

- a. They spoke the truth boldly (**vs. 10**). The crippled man was healed by the name of Jesus Christ. The name ‘Christ’ means the anointed one and this means ‘Messiah’ in Hebrew. This Messiah was the One who was to come as the King of the Jews. The Apostles were saying that the Jews had murdered their Messiah. But God raised Him from the dead.

- b. They explained that this Jesus is the source of the salvation of the Jews (**vss. 11, 12**). He is the Messiah who is their Saviour who was going to save them from their sins. The Apostles were saying that the Jewish leaders needed to put their trust in Jesus in order for them to be saved from their sins. Salvation is only found in the name of Jesus Christ for them and for us today.

## **2. Spirit-filled Believers Pray for God to Work Through His Servants (Acts 4:23-31).**

Instead of praying for their protection and for God to destroy their enemies, the believers:

- a. Prayed for the boldness of the Apostles as they preached the Word (**vs. 29**). What was more important for these believers was the preaching of the Word of God that leads to salvation. They wanted more people to be saved. They were people-centred.
- b. Prayed for God to perform wonders and signs in the name of Jesus (**vs. 30**). They were also concerned with the wellbeing of the people who needed healing from various illnesses. It was about others instead of what they could get from God.
- c. Our challenge today is to realise that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit are concerned about people's salvation from sin and their physical wellbeing.

## **3. The Spirit-filled Believers Meet the Needs of Fellow Believers (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37)**

Various needs were met in the early church. Chapters two and four tell us that the following needs were met:

- a. Spiritual needs (**2:42, 47; 4:33**). Teaching classes were held. Prayer meetings were conducted. The Apostles testified with great power to the resurrection of Jesus.
- b. Material needs (**2:44-46; 4:32, 34-35**). Those who had possession shared with the needy.
- c. Fellowship needs (**2:42, 46-47; 4:32a**). All believers were one in heart and mind. They visited each other at homes. There was fellowship among the believers.
- d. Educational needs (**2:42**). The Apostles taught believers what they believed and about what Jesus taught them. They were informed believers.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. How did John and Peter answer the Jewish council? Why did they do so?
- b. What did the believers pray for when they were persecuted? Discuss this.
- c. The early church compassion on the needy and engaged in ministries that sought to meet those needs. What are we doing to meet the needs of our fellow believers?

### **Conclusion:**

The believers were bold and courageous. They were also compassionate towards other believers and beyond because they were filled with and led by the Holy Spirit. Would you not want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Ask the Father to fill you with His Holy Spirit. Close the class session with prayer.

## **THEME: EXPERIENCING A REAL MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **LESSON 40 - ALL BELIEVERS IN SERVICE TO OTHERS**

**Scripture:** Acts 6:1-7

**Other references:** Acts 6:1 – 8:1

**Objectives:** At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Realise that service to others is for all Spirit-filled believers
- b. Understand that there are various opportunities for serving in the church
- c. Recognise that crises in the church may be opportunities for expansion

**Memory Verse:** Acts 6:3-4

*“Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”*

**Explanation of the memory verse:**

Some conflicts in the church may lead to factions and ultimate splits if not handled well. However, in dealing with the first recorded conflict in the early church, the apostles strongly declared that they would not neglect their core ministry but rather had the church elect eligible people to do the food service. This partnership between the apostles and the ordinary believers resulted in the rapid growth of the church and thus confirmed that all believers have a place to serve other in the ministry of Christ and the church.

**Introduction:**

*Have someone representing the pastor try to perform a task that requires several people, e.g. lifting a table with one of its legs single-handed. Then have him/her ask others, one at a time to help until the task can be done with minimum effort. Note the difference every time someone joins to help. In the same way the work of God would be easier if all believers, filled with the Holy Spirit would work together for the kingdom of God.*

**1. An occasion for increased service or split? (Acts 6:1)**

The apostles had just come through some persecution with victory and much rejoicing. But they never stopped teaching and preaching. The results were that the disciples grew in numbers. However, this growth came with its own challenges. The Grecian Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews. They felt discriminated against because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Whether their complaint was legitimate or not, the leadership did not ignore it. Thus the apostles made time to address the matter, and address it effectively.



## 2. Wise solution for the situation (Acts 6:2-6)

The leaders approached the matter in unity (vs. 2). The whole leadership, in one voice, addressed all the disciples together. They must have consulted with each other and agreed on a unified stance that would bring and strengthen unity among the disciples.

- a. They clearly stated the terms (vs. 2). The apostles would not compromise the ministry of the Word and prayer to wait on the tables.
- b. They gave clear direction (vs. 3). The apostles proposed that seven men be elected to wait on the tables. They gave specific qualifications for those who were to serve:
  - i. They were to come from among the disciples.
  - ii. They were to be known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.

The Holy Spirit, even though they were to merely wait on tables? Yes, it had to be **known** that they were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. All work in the church is God's work and should not be done without His leadership and enablement. No job is too small or insignificant to be done without the Holy Spirit. Unless those serving are filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom, the people they serve might be hurt more than served. Therefore, more than all believers serving in His ministry, God desires that those involved be filled with the Holy Spirit to be effective according to His plan.

- c. They delegated the task (vs. 3b). This meant that those elected would be able to focus on the task and still be responsible to the body of believers.

## 3. Wise solution bears good fruit (Acts 6:5-7)

The proposal pleased the whole group and they elected the seven men who qualified for the task. The men were presented to the apostles “**who prayed and laid hands on them**” (vs. 6) – a sign of approval of their election and a blessing on their ministry. The Word spread, not only through the apostles but also through these men as shown through Stephen (6:8 – 8:1). The number of disciples increased rapidly and a large number of priests were converted (vs. 7).

### Discussion Questions:

- a. Why is it that only a few believers are involved in ministry though most claim to be Spirit-filled?
- b. What opportunities for ministries are available in your church?
- c. How can we be prepared to turn conflicts in the church into opportunities for expansion?

### Conclusion:

Would you allow God to fill you with the Holy Spirit and open your eyes to see the many opportunities of service available to you? Would you be willing to deny yourself and be part of the ministry as God wills?