

# Search The Scriptures

VOLUME 57

*"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).*



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# BEGINNING OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

## 729 Lesson

### SAMUEL REPROVES ISRAEL

**MEMORY VERSE:** "...I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king" (1 Samuel 12:17).

#### **TEXT: 1 Samuel 12:1-25**

Following the conquest of the Ammonites in the previous chapter, all the children of Israel approved and installed Saul as their king at Gilgal. While they and their new king rejoiced and offered peace offerings in that gathering, Samuel knew that all was not well with them. He knew the carnal and self-willed could have no true and lasting peace. Foreseeing the deadly consequences of their carnal choice, he made bold to reveal His mind to them even if that would interrupt their joy.

**Question 1: What can believers learn from Samuel's disposition towards Israel at Gilgal?**

Beginning with their ill-advised request for a king, Samuel reminded Israel at Gilgal that the institution of kingship was not as a result of any misdeed on his or God's part. Making allusion to God's constant response to their cry since the time of their fathers in Egypt, he reproved them for rejecting the kingship of God over them by demanding a king like other nations. Therefore, he counseled them and their king to fear, serve and obey God to avoid divine judgment. In order to convince them that they had displeased the Lord by their request, he prayed and God sent thunder and rain from heaven, even though it was time of harvest when the rains would have stopped. This made them to tremble and see the foolishness of their action. Believers should realize that self-will attracts divine displeasure. They should continue to put their trust in God, follow and obey Him wholeheartedly.

**TESTIMONY OF CLEAR CONSCIENCE AND PURE LIFESTYLE** (1 Samuel 12:1-5; John 14:30; Matthew 3:17; Mark 3:11; 5:7; John 18:38; 1 Corinthians 4:4; Acts 24:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:10; 1 Timothy 1:5,6,19; Hebrews 13:18; 1 Peter 3:21)

Samuel lived a righteous life from childhood after his dedication to the Lord by his parents. Having been taught by Eli on the proper manner of responding to the voice and instructions of God, he continued to walk consistently before Him (1 Samuel 3:9,10). At the time of this account, he had become old and gray-headed and was able to defend his innocence, clear conscience and godly lifestyle before them. “...**I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day**” (1 Samuel 12:2). With a clear conscience, he placed his life before them to be examined using some criteria that would leave many Christian servants laden with guilt should similar scrutiny be conducted on their character. He challenged them to bring out evidence of extortion, fraud, oppression and bribery against him. In fact, he was ready to make restitution if he had inadvertently defrauded, oppressed or taken bribe from any of them.

Samuel believed in the necessity of having a clear conscience and making restitution where necessary. Like him, believers should live transparently and holy so that they can boldly stand and witness before anyone and anywhere (1 John 4:17; Proverbs 28:1). God wants our lives to be epistles of godliness and a pattern for others to emulate.

<p><b>Question 2: Why is it important for a believer to have a clear conscience towards God and man?</b></p>
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Samuel possessed a simple, sincere and godly conscience free of offence and condemnation (Romans 2:15; 8:1; 2 Corinthians 1:12). Thus, he could call God and the new king (Saul) as witnesses. A good conscience is capable of assuring someone of good deeds or convict him of sin against God or man (John 8:9). Though it is possible to have a conscience of sins, a conscience of idols, a defiled conscience and a seared conscience (Hebrews 10:12; 1 Corinthians 8:7; Titus 1:15; 1 Timothy 4:2), believers are

enjoined to obtain and maintain a good and pure conscience void of offence toward God and man (1 Timothy 1:5,19; Hebrews 13:18; 1Peter 3:21; 1 Timothy 3:9; 2 Timothy 1:3).

The children of Israel affirmed the claim of Samuel that he had not defrauded, oppressed or taken bribes from them (1 Samuel 12:4). The testimony of Samuel challenges Christians to conduct themselves in a way that others can attest to their transparency. In leadership as well as daily relationships with others, believers should be unblameable and above reproach.

Christ teaches that He saves us to have godly lifestyles, not only in the secret but also in the open. He, therefore, commands that believers lead brighter lives that reprove as well as dispel the darkness of sin and evil (Matthew 5:14-16). Aside Christ's own testimony, the Father, demons and men declared our Lord was sinless and pure. Also, Paul the apostle lived a Christ-like life with a conscience void of offence toward God and man. Like Samuel, he called God and believers of his day as witnesses of his holy lifestyle. God expects believers to be **"...blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world "** (Philippians 2:15). If Samuel could be steadfast in righteousness from childhood till old age, present-day believers must pray for grace to be steadfast in holiness and service till the end of their lives. They must also commit themselves to winning children to the Lord.

**SAMUEL REPROVES ISRAEL FOR INGRATITUDE TO GOD** (1 Samuel 12:6-13; 1 Samuel 8:6-9; Psalm 103:1-5)

After testifying and obtaining affirmation that he led a righteous life before Israel, Samuel went further to prove that God had been gracious to them. He reminded them of the great mercies of God from the time of their preservation from famine in Egypt, to point out that their demand for a king was the height of ingratitude to God. Bidding them to **"stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers"** (1 Samuel 12:7), he rehearsed how Jacob with his

descendants entered Egypt presumably on account of famine and was preserved. While in bondage in Egypt, their fathers cried unto God and He delivered them with a mighty hand through Moses and Aaron. Between their exodus from Egypt to settlement in Canaan, Samuel noted that they had been inconsistent in their relationship with God; they were fond of forgetting Him and consequently made the enemy nations to oppress them. Each time they realized and repented, God showed mercy and delivered them.

As part of God's great mercies, Samuel enumerated leaders that He raised to deliver Israel and lead them on the part of righteousness. They included Moses, Aaron, Jerubbaal, Bedan, Jephthah and Samuel. He, therefore, reasoned that if God could deliver them from those mighty nations and from troubles, how would He not deliver them from Nahash? This reminiscence was to show God's great kindness and unmerited favor towards Israel which they were not mindful to reciprocate. Believers sometimes behave like the children of Israel by taking decisions and actions on some important issues without prayer and counsel, which may have dire consequences.

**Question 3: How should a believer handle rebuke from leaders?**

Forgetting the past mercies and help of God, some believers complain, murmur and turn to human alternatives, like the children of Israel. Believers should show wholehearted gratitude and appreciation to God for the great and manifold blessings He gives us every time. Surely, our God is good.

Everyone can appreciate God by surrendering their lives to Christ and making Him their King. They can feed on His Word and give priority to living for Him all the days of their lives. They can also serve Him by showing love to other people, giving special offering for the progress of His work and winning souls into His kingdom. Israel cried to God when they were in pains but rejected Him in their ease. Believers are to trust God and depend on Him at all times (Psalm 103:1-5).

**Question 4: In what ways can believers show gratitude to God?**

**CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD** (1 Samuel 12:14-25; Deuteronomy 10:21; 28:1-14; Psalm 126:2,3; Ecclesiastes 12:13,14)

After rebuking them for their ingratitude, Samuel prescribed the conditions for Israel's continued relationship with God. **"If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him and obey His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers** (1 Samuel 12:14,15).

Having a king over them did not exempt them from being loyal to the King of kings. Israel was to fear, serve and obey God with all their heart. The purpose of the rebuke was to make them see their folly so they could repent and wholeheartedly follow the Lord. Believers learn here that acknowledgment of one's sinful state often precedes repentance. The prodigal son first realized the error of running away from his father before returning home to seek forgiveness and restoration (Luke 15:17-20). Preachers should endeavor to make sinners and backsliders see their folly of rebelling against God and how to reconcile with Him. Everyone who reconciles with Him should recognize God's supremacy over their lives, submit to and obey Him in all things.

To confirm that their action was sinful and displeasing to God exceedingly, Samuel enjoined them to wait for a sign **"that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of God, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel"** (1 Samuel 12:17). God is committed to confirming the words and prayer of His servants who serve Him in holiness and righteousness.

It is cheering to note that the children of Israel responded quickly by repenting of their evil (1 Samuel 12:18). It is the same response God demands from those



who have sinned against Him or done contrary to His will (Acts 17:30). We should not wait for Him to send “thunder and rain” before responding to His bidding. Sinners and backsliders should respond to God’s call to salvation by repenting of their sin and mending their ways.

Following Israel’s repentance, Samuel exhorted them not to fear but continue to follow and serve God with all their hearts. He specifically told them not to turn aside from following Him but refrain from vain things which do not profit. He further assured them that God would not forsake them (1 Samuel 12:21). Though God is always faithful to keep His words, we must abide in Him to enjoy divine preservation.

Samuel opined that it is sinful to fail to pray for and teach the laity. **“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way”** (1 Samuel 12:23). Leaders should employ the weapon of ceaseless intercession for the congregation if they wish to see the presence and power of God in their lives. Prayers will open their eyes to the necessity of obtaining the basic Christian experiences of salvation, sanctification, Holy Ghost baptism, etc. The people of God should also be taught His undiluted Word so they could be built up and established in the grace of God and prepared for heaven. They must give themselves to prayer and ministry of the word so the church could be transformed and grow spiritually and numerically (Acts 6:4; 2 Timothy 3:16,17).

**Question 5: What impact would ceaseless prayers of leaders have on the work of the ministry?**

The kernel of the right way Samuel taught the children of Israel was: **“Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you”** (1 Samuel 12:24). They were required to fear the Lord. The reverential fear of God would make them depart from evil. The fear of God makes a person to hate and depart from evil (Proverbs 3:7; 8:13). They were also required to serve Him in truth; which means to always obey, love, speak and live

by the truth of God’s word (1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:15; Zechariah 8:16; Psalm 51:6; John 18:37; Psalm 119:30). Samuel also pointed out to Israel the way to reciprocate God’s great kindness towards them.

God has not changed: He requires wholehearted commitment and service from everyone He has saved. Anyone who reneges on his profession of repentance or fails to meet the conditions for continued relationship with Him risks divine wrath and judgment (1 Samuel 12:25).

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Ephes.	5-6	Ezra	7
TUE	Philipp.	1-2	“	8
WED	“	3-4	“	9-10
THUR	Coloss.	1-2	Nehem.	1-2
FRI	“	3-4	“	3-4
SAT	1 Thess	1-2	“	5-6
SUN	“	3-4	“	7

# 730 Lesson

## SAUL DISOBEYS THE LORD

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever” (1 Samuel 13:13).

**TEXT: 1 Samuel 13:1-23**

**S**amuel had reproved the children of Israel for rejecting God’s rule over them by demanding a human king like other nations, in the previous chapter.

In our text, the new king Saul found himself in a war situation and was expected to obey the Lord according to the words of Samuel. But he yielded to pressure and forced himself to offer sacrifices that should have been handled by Samuel. This marked the beginning of his fall as divine judgment was pronounced upon him. From his experience, believers learn that disobedience to divine directives has dire consequences while obedience attracts His blessings.

**Question 1: Mention the danger of disobeying God?**

**SAUL’S DISOBEDIENCE** (1 Samuel 13:1-12; 10:8; 12:14,15; 15:17-23; Psalm 118:9; Habakkuk 2:3; Hebrews 2:1-3)

The text opens with Israel’s military condition under the reign of Saul. He had an army of 3,000 that he and Jonathan, his son commanded. But at this time, the Philistines had supremacy over Israel and had built military outposts at the center of Israel’s territory. Jonathan attacked and conquered them at Geba and, in response, the Philistines mobilized their chariots and horses against Israel. Saul also blew the trumpet to mobilize the Israelites in what could be considered a war of independence.

The Philistine army was very organized and well equipped, whereas the fighting men of Israel were only a little better than a militia with inferior weapons. The Israelites were clearly outmatched and the people were distressed. Some deserted their commander and many even relocated across Jordan. But a few men remained with Saul and waited fearfully for Samuel in Gilgal.

**Question 2: Why is it wrong to place our trust in man or human institution?**

Here, we see the total weakness of Israel's king and the limitation of human institutions in times of emergency. **"As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling"** (1 Samuel 13:7). The Israelites had chosen a king so he could fight their battles and free them from their enemies. They concluded Saul would be their ideal champion in time of war because he had led them in victory over Nahash and the Ammonites. They were shortsighted to foresee the existence of a well organized army that might overrun them. When confronted by a more formidable Philistine army, they realized they needed more than a human leader to defeat the enemy. This confrontation with the Philistines taught Israel that **"it is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes"** (Psalm 118:9).

**Question 3: What lessons can we learn from Saul's disobedience?**

In preparation for the battle, Samuel instructed Saul to wait seven days at Gilgal until he would come and offer the prescribed sacrifice and the way forward. This directive, which was given after Saul had reigned for two years over Israel, was similar to what was given before his coronation (1 Samuel 13:8; 10:8). The instruction was very clear: Saul should wait for seven days at Gilgal until Samuel came to offer sacrifices. While Samuel delayed to come, he became desperate because the few people with him had begun to leave. Therefore, he 'forced' himself and offered the sacrifices. As soon as he finished, Samuel arrived.

There are important lessons from Saul's disobedience. First, Samuel's delay turned out to be a test of patience

and obedience to God, but he failed. God often uses little things to test our virtues of obedience, faith, patience, humility or generosity. We need to be very watchful in stressful situations. Second, God is pleased only when our obedience is total and complete. Though Saul waited till the seventh day, he did not wait till the end of the day.

Third, deviating from God's commandments by adding to or subtracting from His clear instructions is always counted as disobedience. Fourth, Saul's disobedience reveals the general tendency of the natural man. Saul was humble and non-retaliatory at the beginning of his reign (1 Samuel 10:21-27; 11:11-13), but afterwards manifested pride and self-will. He felt he could do without Samuel and presumed to help the situation, whether it was right or wrong.

Fifth, he was more concerned about his own success in battle than an eye for God's glory and obedience to His command. We should not be desperate about our own welfare at the expense of God's glory.

Sixth, believers must learn to wait for God even when there is an apparent delay in the fulfillment of His promises. God told Habakkuk, **"though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry"** (Habakkuk 2:3). The proper attitude to maintain when under pressure is to be patient and allow the peace of God to rule our hearts and minds. Seventh, the waiting of Saul for Samuel may be likened to that of believers waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We should not be moved by any pressure from the world to turn away from Him while He tarries.

**GOD'S SENTENCE ON SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE**  
(1 Samuel 13:13-15; 15:22-29; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 1:16-20; Ecclesiastes 8:11-13)

Samuel rebuked Saul for his rashness and disobedience. He told him, **"Thou hast done foolishly"**. His excuse that the men were scattering from him was a lame one. But his greatest folly was his belief that he could actually obtain God's favor through a sacrifice offered in disobedience. If Saul had obeyed God, his kingdom would have been established, but he ended forfeiting his kingship.

The sins of Saul consisted of self-will, presumption and disobedience to God's plain command. On account of these, God rejected him and terminated his dynasty. Rather than repent, he gave excuses and blamed Samuel indirectly for coming late. Thus, he aggravated his sins by trying to justify his disobedience. Even when Samuel spoke of the kingdom being taken from him, he did not show any remorse. Genuine sorrow for his sin and a determination to turn from the path of disobedience could have prevented his total rejection by God.

**Question 4: Point out one major difference between Saul and David in matters of transgression.**

Justifying a sinful action, making excuses for wrongdoing, blaming others and trying to make them responsible for our own blunders are signs of weakness, hard-heartedness and impenitence. This is a major weakness in Saul that differentiated him from David, **“a man after his own heart”** (1 Samuel 13:14). In David, we see the qualities of humility, genuine repentance, patience and faith. When he sinned and was confronted with it, he repented and was forgiven (2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51). We learn that genuine repentance will always avert God's judgment upon a sinner or backslider, but the impenitent will experience His judgment (Isaiah 1:16-20; Proverbs 28:13; Jeremiah 3:12,13; 1 John 1:9). While rebuking Saul, Samuel hinted that God had found a replacement for him. He said, **“the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people”** (1 Samuel 13:14). Though David was still very young at this time and Saul would still occupy the throne for a considerable period of time, his continuity in that position is no proof of divine approval. When God speaks, it may take a long time to come to pass, but His words will be fulfilled.

King Saul seemed not to accept God's verdict that terminated his dynasty. Much later, he tried to kill David to pave way for Jonathan his son to succeed him, but this plot failed (1 Samuel 20:30,31). In effect, Saul fought against the divine sentence.

**ISRAEL'S OPPRESSION BY THE PHILISTINES** (1 Samuel 13:2-7,16-23; 7:13,14; 2 Corinthians 10:4-6; Ephesians 6:10-18)

The chapter closes with a description of Israel's military condition under their chosen king. While waiting at Gilgal, Saul's army had reduced from 3,000 to 600. The Philistines had also dislodged Saul's camp from Michmash and forced him to relocate and join Jonathan at Gibeah (1 Samuel 13:2,16). Meanwhile, the Philistines sent three bands of raiders that spoiled Israel along three major routes. In this way, the Israelites were hindered from mobilizing more troops at Gibeah. To compound their problems, the Philistines employed a policy of disarmament to keep Israel from making metallic weapons. They barred Israelites from having smiths and kept them totally dependent on the Philistines for the maintenance of their farm tools. This way, they would monitor and exploit them economically and render them vulnerable in battle.

It is an irony that the military condition of Israel under their chosen king deteriorated than at the time Samuel was left in full control. Samuel had led the nation to conquer and subjugate the Philistines to the extent that they were not able to invade the coasts of Israel (1 Samuel 7:13,14). But under Saul, the nation was disarmed and rendered greatly dependent upon their enemies. They must have realized that God's presence was needed and not the influence of a king. Though Saul eventually won some victories in battle, his end and Israel's spiritual fortune under his reign were undesirable.

Like the Philistines, Satan tries to disarm believers or keep them from using the weapons God has provided for them. Just as battles believers fight are now spiritual, God has equipped us with spiritual weapons of faith, the word of God, prayer, the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the truth of the gospel and the helmet of salvation to overcome the enemy. But we must be strong in the Lord, put on the whole armor of God and use the spiritual weapons to defeat the devil and his cohorts and destroy their works (2 Corinthians 10:4- 6; Ephesians 6:10-18).

Victory in spiritual warfare is based on the truth that Jesus has disarmed principalities and powers and made an open show of them. Through His death and resurrection, He took away Satan’s power, thereby making him vulnerable to defeat from true believers. Now we can conquer the powers of darkness and rejoice in Christ who has already **“spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it”** (Colossians 2:15). The obedient child of God will always be victorious.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	1 Thess.	5	Nehemiah	8
TUE	2 Thess.	1-2	“	9
WED	“	3	“	10
THUR	1 Tim.	1-2	“	11
FRI	“	3-4	“	12
SAT	“	5-6	“	13
SUN	2 Tim.	1-2	Esther	1-2



# 731 Lesson

## JONATHAN TRIUMPHS OVER THE PHILISTINES

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few” (1 Samuel 14:6).

**TEXT: 1 Samuel 14:1-52**

Looking at the build up to this crucial battle against the Philistines, Israel’s situation was really critical and it appeared they were in for total defeat. Apart from the strategic location of the Philistines in their territory, there were other factors why the hope of victory appeared dim. One, they were already dispirited and low in morale. Majority had deserted their commander due to fear. Many residents had either gone into hiding or gone across Jordan to seek refuge. Two, Israel’s army had inferior weapons because the Philistines placed embargo on metal work in Israel; only Saul and Jonathan had swords or spears made of metal while others probably held whatever they could. In contrast, the Philistines had chariots, horses, and deadly weapons at their disposal. Three, the size of the Philistine army was frightening. They were uncountable, whereas Israel’s three thousand special squad had dwindled to only six hundred. Four, Saul had disobeyed and displeased God by offering a presumptuous sacrifice in preparation for the battle. The situation was such that Israel could not confidently count on God for support as they went into the battle.

**Question 1: From the viewpoint of both armies in this battle, why is it wrong to put our confidence in man?**

Our text shows that despite their extremity, the children of Israel won a resounding victory over the Philistines because Jonathan acted in courage and faith. It shows that God does not require carnal weapons or human skills to win in battle. It is also clear that as one sinner does much evil, a single man of faith, courage

and wisdom can do much good. Whereas, Saul failed God, Jonathan his son decided to be different.

But it is most remarkable to note how overconfidence and dependence on man ultimately lead to defeat and disappointment. The Philistines were overconfident because of their military skills, superior weapons and numerical advantage over Israel, but they were defeated. Also, the Israelites who put their trust in Saul whom they had requested to be king over them and fight their battles, were humiliated even before the battle started. They were distressed and had to hide in caves, thickets, rocks, high places and pits (1 Samuel 13:6). Our confidence should be in God who is able to save, no matter what extremities we may find ourselves. **“They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever”** (Psalm 125:1).

**COURAGE AND FAITH OF JONATHAN** (1 Samuel 14:1- 23;13:3; Deuteronomy 20:1-4; Joshua 1:5,9; 2Chronicles 32:7,8; 20:15-24; Psalm 33:16-17; Mark 9:23,24)

The Israelites encamped in Gibeah while the Philistines encamped at Michmash. In the meantime, Saul sat under a tree, surrounded by trembling soldiers and they were undecided what step to take. The Philistine raiders had cut off any hope of reinforcement from the northern tribes and the situation looked hopeless. But Jonathan decided to take an extraordinary step of faith. He sneaked out of Israel’s camp with his armorbearer and initiated an attack against the Philistines without telling his father.

Jonathan’s action was unconventional and at variance with military tactics and discipline. But Jonathan must have taken the risky step because God inspired him to do so. He probably knew his father would have hindered him if he discussed the plan with him.

**Question 2: Why is it often necessary to separate ourselves from doubters and unbelieving people?**

Most times, believers need to act like Jonathan and come out of doubting and unbelieving people who are given to fear, doubt, superstition and mere tradition. No

one will ever do extraordinary things for God until he steps out of the crowd transfixed by fear, failure and defeat. Fear and unbelief are contagious. That is the reason God instructed the Israelites not to allow those who were fearful go with them to battle. In the battles of life, there are occasions when we have to take a step of faith.

Jonathan told his armorbearer his plan and expressed his faith in God's power to save, whether with few or many. Although Jonathan included a clause that looked like doubt or uncertainty, he allowed his doubt to be overruled by his faith in God's omnipotence. He trusted God and took a bold step to smite the Philistines. In approaching the Philistines, Jonathan had to crawl up the mountain. Then he asked to know God's mind by a sign. If the Philistines invited them to come over, that would be a positive sign that God had given them the victory; but if they barred them from coming over, that would be a negative sign.

It was not out of place for Jonathan to ask for guidance from God with the aid of a sign. The practice was in agreement with the dispensation in which he lived, and others had used it profitably (Genesis 24:13; Judges 6:17-21,36-40). But believers in the New Testament dispensation cannot take these as precedents. We are to walk by faith and not by sight. We do not depend on signs for guidance but on the word of God and the Holy Spirit. Whenever we need God's leading over any issue of life, the proper step to take is to pray, find what the Scripture says about the subject and follow the principles or precepts shown. One reason the Holy Spirit was sent to fill believers is that He might guide them into all truth. **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God"** (Romans 8:14).

God honored the faith of Jonathan and his armorbearer. The Philistines invited them to come over to their camp and Jonathan decided to act with courage. He must have killed the first soldiers he came in contact with and that unexpected boldness probably surprised the Philistines who were caught off guard. Then, God struck the Philistines with terror and they began to kill one another and many of them fled. In addition to

the supernatural terror upon them, God also caused the earth to quake in the camp. The confusion in the camp of the Philistines was quickly noticed by Saul and the few men with him. His immediate response was to inquire from God, but he later changed his mind and suspected that some soldiers must have sneaked out to stage a surprise attack against the Philistines. A quick check revealed that it was Jonathan and his armorbearer. Thereafter, Saul and the Israelites rallied together in pursuit and defeat of the Philistines. **“So the LORD saved Israel that day”**.

**CURSE FOR DISOBEYING SAUL’S RASH OATH** (1 Samuel 14:24-52; Judges 11:30-35; Ecclesiastes 5:1-5; Mark 6:21-27)

After God had confused the Philistines and Israel set to overrun them, Saul displayed a kind of religious zeal that was without wisdom. He commanded that no one should taste any food until evening and placed a curse on anyone who violated this oath. Ostensibly, Saul consigned the fighting men to a total fast in an attempt to get them fully committed to the plunder of the Philistines, but it was a needless and counter-productive decision.

**Question 3: Why was Saul’s oath unnecessary? Give examples of similar rash oaths in the Scripture.**

Already God had given Israel the victory and all they needed was to pursue the Philistines and plunder them. Definitely, the fighting men would need food to replenish their strength but Saul’s oath denied them this basic need. It was tantamount to placing a heavy yoke on the people who were just coming out of their demoralized condition. God never commanded Israel’s soldiers to fast at the war front, but Saul added his own self-imposed idea to God’s prescription. Clearly then, this rash oath was another manifestation of Saul’s self-will and religious hypocrisy. He wanted to take credit for a victory he did not initiate or execute. He wanted it to appear as if the victory came about because of the fast he imposed. However, the absurdity of the oath becomes more obvious when we consider its consequences: the people

were distressed, fainting, and complaining. It also limited the victory of Israel because some of the Philistines were able to escape. But the most appalling effect was the risk of Jonathan being put to death because he ignorantly violated the oath. He was not present when Saul placed the curse on anyone who tasted any food; so he found honey in the field and ate whereas other soldiers felt restricted by the oath. It was a terrible anticlimax that Jonathan, whom God had used to achieve victory for Israel, had to face the prospect of being executed by his own commander, just because of an irrational oath. Worse still, the people were so hungry to the extent that they killed their prey contrary to God's commandment, and ate the meat with blood because they could not wait to cook it. Thus, the people of Israel were placed in a situation where they kept the commandment of a man but broke God's law (Leviticus 3:17; 7:26,27; Deuteronomy 12:16; Mark 7:6-13).

The life of Saul shows some basic contradictions which are also observable in many religious people today. Saul who had earlier disobeyed God was very eager to enforce his own command, even if it meant killing his own son. Many people disobey God's law but are so strict in enforcing their own rules and demanding total submission from others. In addition, Saul sat under a pomegranate tree, unable to initiate any step against the Philistines; but no sooner had Jonathan taken the initiative through God's help, Saul took over, attempting to play the hero (1 Samuel 14:12; 16-24; 13:3). Taking the credit for what others accomplished is not a virtue and it should not be attributed to believers. Saul was eager to claim the credit due to Jonathan but was unwilling to accept responsibility for his own wrongdoing. Also, he placed more emphasis on outward religious observances such as sacrifices, fasting and oaths more than obedience and humility before God (1 Samuel 13:9-14; 14:24; 15:9,13-25).

**Question 4: How can leaders avoid the kind of counterproductive decision taken by Saul?**

Saul's attempt to kill Jonathan because he violated his oath pitched him against the people and almost

rubbished what should have been a great victory celebration. But Saul could have avoided this unfortunate situation if he had consulted God first. Believers can avoid Saul's error in leadership and decision-making by seeking God's guidance in everything. Second, by consulting with others and taking counsel from Spirit-filled leaders or colleagues. Third, if they take thought to appraise the effect the decision would have on others – children, youths, married people, etc. Fourth, be flexible and make provision for unforeseen circumstances and exceptions to the rule. Fifth, prepare to change when the decision is found to be wrong or becomes counter-productive.

**COOPERATION AND FAITH IN GOD FOR VICTORY** (1 Samuel 14:6,7,12,45; Psalm 37:5; Proverbs 3:5; 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Mark 9:23; 11:22-24; 10:27; 16:20)

Israel's victory over the Philistines came about as a result of divine-human partnership. Jonathan and his armorbearer cooperated to initiate the attack against the Philistines despite the risk involved and the great odds against Israel. They took a step of faith and trusted God to give them the victory. God also worked with them and honored their faith by terrifying the Philistines, causing them to kill one another. To win battle in any area of life and ministry, believers need to partner with God and trust Him. But they also need the cooperation of other people too. Though Jonathan initiated the attack, he and his armorbearer could not have won the victory without the cooperation of other Israelites.

**Question 5: Why is cooperation an essential ingredient for victory in life?**

Jonathan and his armorbearer cooperated and were united in faith. Their kind of cooperation is what believers need to achieve victory in life, family and ministry. When Jonathan suggested his plan, his armorbearer said, "**Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart**" (1 Samuel 14:7). Leaders need such workers who can support and follow them in faith as they pursue the vision of world evangelization. Fellow-workers must also be of the same mind and purpose. Two are better than one because we cannot

fight the battles of life alone. Our foes are formidable and we are weak in ourselves except God helps us. We need to cooperate with Him and with one another. All of life is about God working with men. In the field of evangelism, as we preach the gospel, He works with us by confirming the word with signs following.

<b>DAILY BIBLE READING</b>				
	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	2 Timothy	3-4	Esther	3-4
TUE	Titus	1-3	“	5-6
WED	Philemon		“	7-8
THUR	Hebrews	1-2	“	9-10
FRI	“	3-4	Job	1-2
SAT	“	5-6	“	3-4
SUN	“	7-8	“	5-6

# 732 Lesson

## GOD REJECTS SAUL

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22).

### **TEXT: 1 Samuel 15:1-35**

**S**aul, the first king of Israel, was a valiant soldier. His exploits as a military leader began from the time he was anointed king and it is summarized thus: **“So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them. And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them”** (1 Samuel 14:47,48). But these exploits appeared to have built in him a strong carnal confidence. He seemed to have transferred his confidence in the living God to his military tactics and experience; **“...and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him”**. His strength soon became his weakness, as this study shows. His experience became more important to him than divine instruction. The desire to please people overtook the necessity of pleasing God. Believers should be more interested in the Lord of the work than the work of the Lord. We should remain humble, giving attention to details of divine instruction lest we derail into self-will, self-management and disobedience, thereby losing the favor of God. It is the neglect of the above safeguards that caused Saul’s rejection as king in Israel.

**Question 1: What should be the attitude of those called by God into leadership positions or particular assignments?**

**GOD’S COMMAND TO SAUL TO DESTROY AMALEK**  
(1 Samuel 15:1-9; Exodus 17:8-16; Deuteronomy 25:17-19)



The Almighty God usually has a specific purpose for calling people into His service. His servants are His battle axe to fight and fulfil His purpose on earth (Jeremiah 1:10,8; 51:20,23). No one called by God should therefore pursue a personal agenda or fashion out a job description different from what God prescribed (Isaiah 10:15).

God gave king Saul a definite command to destroy Amalek. **“Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass”** (1 Samuel 15:3). The command to destroy Amalek came out of the Lord’s sense of retributive justice. The story goes back to Rephidim when Amalek bitterly contended with the newly redeemed people of Israel on their way from Egypt. It was a tense battle in which the Lord used Joshua and Moses to fight Amalek and ensured Israel’s victory. While Joshua led the physical army, Moses engaged in spiritual warfare by interceding on the mount with Aaron and Hur sustaining his hands. At the end, Amalek was thoroughly discomfited. But they had incurred divine wrath: **“And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven”** (Exodus 17:14). Moses obeyed God and reiterated it during his farewell messages to Israel with a strong caveat: **“thou shall not forget it”** (Deuteronomy 25:19).

The case of Amalek teaches us that God does not take wickedness and evil lightly. If He proclaims judgment, it will come to pass except the evil doer repents and receives mercy. On the other hand, when God promises to bless His children, He will not forget. He will watch over His word to perform it. While this fact should encourage believers waiting for the fulfillment of His promises to be patient and to persevere, it is a warning for sinners and backsliders to quickly repent lest they partake of His indignation.

**Question 2: What can we learn from the fact that God does not forget His word?**

It is important to note the details of God's command concerning the destruction of Amalek. One, the nature of the destruction had been prophesied. Two, God wanted it to be total and permanent. Third, the instruction was different and peculiar from the normal practice of war in Israel. God permitted the Israelites to enjoy the spoils of war and in some cases, a certain percentage of the spoil was to be dedicated to God (Numbers 31:21-54; Deuteronomy 20:1,19,20; Joshua 11:14). Even in Jericho, God permitted some things to be spared for His treasury (Joshua 6:19). However, God reserves the prerogative to dictate what He wants His people to do. Essentially, in our dispensation, He has revealed His will in His Word.

**Question 3: Mention some things that tend to compete with obedience to God's written word in a believer's life?**

In the case of Amalek, however, God wanted everything destroyed and He made it very clear. This is where the believer needs to be careful. Using mere mental knowledge and experience in God's service in place of His clear directives can be dangerous. We must be wary of distractions through dreams, revelations, false prophecies, predictions, personal opinions, circumstances, feelings, counsels, books, messages or sermons that tend to undermine God's word. The young prophet from Judah lost his life when he permitted a false message from a so-called angel to tamper with his obedience to God's direct instruction. Satan's long-held trick to pervert God's word and derail His servants has not changed. We have been sufficiently warned in the Scriptures not to allow him distract us from doing the will of God (Jeremiah 23:16-18,22; Galatia 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18,19).

Like the treasures of Amalek, sinful habits are to be discarded and destroyed. Any part that is preserved will only remind and entice the seeker back into bondage. Believers are commanded to **"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry"** (Colossians 3:5). Believers in Ephesus destroyed costly artifacts of curious

false religion so as to burn the bridge behind them (Acts 19:19).

However, we need to appreciate Saul's sense of gratitude and fairness to the Kenites for their "**kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt**". For this, they were spared and not destroyed with the Amalekites. One good turn truly deserves another. Besides, far be it of the Lord to destroy the righteous with the wicked (Genesis 18:23,25).

Unfortunately for Saul, in carrying out God's command concerning Amalek, he allowed commonsense and the desire to please the people derail him from obeying the Lord implicitly. "**But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly**" (1 Samuel 15:9). This action sealed his strings of disobedience and signaled an end of his reign.

**GOD'S JUDGMENT AND REJECTION OF DISOBEDIENT SAUL** (1 Samuel 15:10-29; Proverbs 21:3; Hosea 13:11; 1 Kings 11:31)

In spite of the clarity of God's instruction, Saul actually disobeyed God by infusing his own preferences into the assignment. Two, he saw things that were good in what God had already condemned. Three, he spared the king of Amalek for no apparent reason other than the excitement or perhaps the vainglory of bringing home a captive king. Four, he confidently but falsely asserted to Samuel, "**...I have performed the commandment of the Lord.**" Five, he quickly resorted to blame-shifting and excuse-making, claiming that it was the people he led who spared "**the best of the sheep and of the oxen**" to sacrifice to God. Six, he elevated sacrifice above obedience, covering his sin with a veneer of worship. Seven, by his own confession, he feared men above God. It is very easy to blame Saul, but the errors that he fell into are with us today. Many so-called Christians disobey God in clear violation of His revealed will concerning covetousness, marriage, association with the

world, faithfulness in service, and easily besetting sins. It is very easy to fall into the danger of self-will, over-familiarity with God and presumptuous sins. These are evils which soldiers of the cross may fall into when their service is corrupted by the insidious stains of self-will and covetousness. Therefore, we should carefully take to heart the great lessons of Saul's misadventure in divine service and pray like the psalmist: **“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer”** (Psalm 19:13,14).

**Question 4: What steps can the believer take to avoid falling into Saul's error?**

To escape this great danger, believers and servants of God must remain humble and teachable whatever the length of years they have put into the service of the Lord; pay greater attention to details when handling divine instructions; eschew self-interest, self-praise and self-aggrandizement; do nothing out of pride, vainglory or desire for praise; disallow sense of duty from crowding out personal devotion and study of God's word for personal edification. Moreover, when anything lower than the expected standard is discovered, repentance and restitution should be embarked upon immediately. The pronouncement of God's judgment on Saul showed clearly he was no longer **“little”** in his own eyes; he was no longer humble as he was when God chose him to lead Israel. Secondly, he did not obey the voice of the Lord but rather his own will and that of the people. Thirdly, he **“flew upon the spoil”**, that is, he sought personal material advantage which God did not permit on this occasion. However, the event also gave the Lord opportunity to teach us that obedience is better than sacrifice. **“To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice”** (Proverbs 21:3). He considers disobedience and stubbornness as evil as witchcraft and idolatry.

**SAUL'S FALSE REPENTANCE AND FATE** (1 Samuel

15:30-35; Exodus 9:27 34; 10:16; Numbers 22:34; Joshua 7:20; Proverbs 28:13; Luke 15:18,19; Isaiah 57:15-21)

**“Then he said, I have sinned: yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God”** (1 Samuel 15:30). The response of Saul to his glaring disobedience fell short of God’s expectation. It showed that he was not sincerely repentant though he acknowledged his folly: **“I have sinned”**. The same words were recorded concerning Pharaoh, the hard-hearted king of Egypt. He said it three times (Exodus 9:27,34; 10:16) without any fruit of true repentance. Balaam, the false prophet of Midian, when confronted by the angel of God, also said, **“I have sinned”** (Numbers 22:34). Achan, the troubler of Israel said the same words (Joshua 7:20). But none of these people really repented; if they truly and sincerely did, God would have forgiven them. He says, **“...I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works”** (Revelation 2:23). Confession of sin alone without readiness to forsake them cannot bring the mercy of God (Proverbs 28:13).

In Saul’s case, he was still bargaining for honor, although he was caught red-handed in sin. When the prodigal son realized his error, he emptied himself of all self-glory and dignity, sincerely acknowledging his unworthiness before his father (Luke 15:18,19). This is a great lesson to those who refuse to confess their sin because they are afraid to lose the honor and privilege attached to their position in the church. Rather than have the peace and healing that follow forgiveness, such people struggle with inner restlessness and fear, when humility and contrition would have secured them God’s favor (Isaiah 57:15-21).

<b>Question 5: How genuine was Saul’s repentance?</b>
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It is shocking that in the face of such heavy judgment and rejection, Saul could still request for honor. Since that was more important to him, Samuel obliged. He

yielded to his pressure to be honored “**before the elders of my people, and before Israel**” (1 Samuel 15:31). Rather than being broken down by the proclamation that the kingdom has been removed from him, he insisted on having honor from men. How some people would prefer exchanging the prospect of getting to heaven to having honor from men! God forbid.

Without further delay, prophet Samuel performed the divine judgment upon the king of the Amalekites by slaughtering him. If Saul would spare Agag, Samuel would not be an accomplice. He left Saul to gratify himself with his spoils of war: sheep, oxen and the honor of men. But he went back home to weep for Saul while God regretted that He ever gave Saul the privilege of being king. What a lost privilege!

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Hebrews	9-10	Job 7-8
TUE	“	11	“ 9-10
WED	“	12-13	“ 11-12
THUR	James	1-2	“ 13-14
FRI	“	3-4	“ 15-17
SAT	“	5	“ 18-19
SUN	1 Peter	1-2	“ 20-21

# 733 Lesson

## DAVID ANOINTED KING

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah” (1 Samuel 16:13).

### **TEXT: 1 Samuel 16:1-23**

The previous chapter ended with God’s rejection of Saul as king and Samuel’s severance of relationship with him. Though he separated from Saul, he still mourned at the negative turn of events. Samuel manifested a godly attitude that should characterize every true believer when a fellow child of God falls (Hebrews 13:7; 2 Samuel 1:5-27). God dissuaded him from grieving any further over Saul but proceed to Jesse’s house to anoint his successor to the throne. The failure of one person cannot hinder the progress of His work and cause in the world.

**Question 1: What can believers learn from Samuel’s disposition towards Saul and God’s instruction to him?**

In the chapter under study, God guided Samuel to anoint David king. The details of this transition in Israel’s leadership show the superiority of God’s wisdom over man’s judgment and how He chooses the lowly and despised to fulfill His purpose. God chose David, an unlikely and unexpected candidate, to become Israel’s next king; and by the end of the chapter, the shepherd boy had grown to become a valiant warrior who could also use his gift to relieve Saul of his spiritual affliction.

**GOD GUIDES SAMUEL** (1 Samuel 16:1-10; Psalm 147:10,11; Proverbs 31:30; Isaiah 55:8,9; Luke 16:15; John 7:24; 1 Peter 3:3,4)

God told Samuel to move to Bethlehem and anoint one of the sons of Jesse in place of Saul. But Samuel expressed fear about Saul’s reaction if he heard.

Samuel's fear, though legitimate, was unfounded because God would not send His servant on an errand without preserving him. Though it was treasonable to appoint another king while the incumbent was still reigning, Samuel was only sent to privately anoint David and not to publicly coronate him. David's anointing at this time was symbolic of God's choice and served the purpose of setting him apart and to endue him with power for service. The anointing was not intended to set David on the throne immediately but a token of divine covenant and revelation that he had an important responsibility to carry out in the future.

To allay Samuel's fear, God instructed him to take an heifer and call Jesse to the sacrifice. Samuel eventually went to Bethlehem and did as God instructed him. The elders were surprised to see him because Bethlehem was not part of his normal itinerary. After the offering, Jesse brought his sons as required by Samuel. The first son was Eliab. His stature was similar to Saul's and his outlook made Samuel to conclude that **"surely the LORD's anointed is before him"**. But God said, **"Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart"** (1 Samuel 16:6,7).

**Question 2: Why is it necessary to pray and be guided by God when choosing people for important assignments?**

Like Samuel, people are prone to making choices on the basis of physical or outward qualities, skills or intellectual capabilities, but God places emphasis on the condition of the heart. Only He can reveal what is in the heart of a person. He knows the intentions, thoughts and state of every heart. Therefore, there is the need to pray and depend upon the Lord for guidance whenever we want to choose people for any assignment in the church. In the choice of workers, marriage and business partners, we should emphasize spiritual qualities and pray to be guided by God. Most people cover their inward unfitness with impressive outward appearances. Rather than place emphasis on educational



qualifications, exceptional skills, appearance, oratory, and other outward qualities, we should allow God to show us the state of the heart and its hidden qualities of faith, humility and yielded disposition (1 Peter 3:3,4).

We learn from Samuel's mistake that there is no level of spiritual growth that precludes the possibility of error in judgment. No doubt, he was old and experienced in spiritual matters. He was used to receiving and transmitting messages from God before this event. On this occasion however, he would have poured the anointing oil on the wrong head if God had not corrected him. The lessons from this are very obvious: every Christian must remain humble and never over-estimate the soundness of their personal assessment of others. In making choices, believers should rely on God to give guidance. Spiritual leaders should also be held up in prayers before God so that they would be guided to make right decisions at all times. If we judge by outward appearance alone, we may inadvertently choose those whom God has rejected or overlook those He has chosen.

**THE PROMOTION AND ANOINTING OF DAVID** (1 Samuel 16:11-13; 2:7,8; Psalms 89:20-37; 75:4-7; 113:7,8; Isaiah 55:8; James 4:6,10)

Jesse assembled seven of his sons before Samuel, leaving out David. When none of them was chosen, Samuel inquired if he had another son. The answer showed that he did not reckon with David as being considered by God for any divine assignment. This proves that God's ways are different from man's. Samuel commanded David to be brought from the field where he tended the flock and anointed him.

**Question 3: Point out some lessons from the anointing of David.**

David's anointing plays up a number of truths. First, he was the last born of the family but God preferred him above his elder brothers. God's choice is not always according to rank or position of birth, but in line with His own principles. Second, the seven sons had their good qualities and talents but God did not choose them.

Natural talents are not sufficient when it comes to spiritual service.

Third, David was engaged in a very humble duty and did nothing by way of campaign for kingship. God promotes the humble. It is not necessary to solicit or struggle for position in the church. Fourth, the anointing of David at this time took place long before he ascended the throne.

Fifth, David's anointing here was not the final one; it had three phases: the initial private one in Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16:12,13), his anointing as king over Judah (2 Samuel 2:4) and the one over all Israel (2 Samuel 5:3). Believers should not be puffed up because of their initial spiritual promotion and manifestation of God's hand upon their lives. Greater things will yet come if they remain humble, obedient and focused on God.

**DAVID'S MINISTRY BEFORE SAUL** (1 Samuel 16:14-23; 2 Chronicles 20:21-24; Matthew 12:43-45; Acts 16:25,26)

After his anointing, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David to empower him for his future role. In contrast, the Spirit of God departed from Saul and an evil spirit troubled him. Like Samson, when the Lord left him, he became powerless and exposed to torment by the enemy. It is a tragedy when a leader forfeits the presence and power of God and has to struggle in the flesh to keep on in ministry. Though Saul's condition was frightening, David was called to minister before him. He was not afraid of the difficult assignment because the Lord was with him.

**Question 4: Explain the expression "an evil spirit from the LORD".**

God permitted an evil spirit to torment Saul since he had rejected Him and decided to follow his own devices. The phrase, "**an evil spirit from the LORD**" means that He allowed or permitted an evil spirit to gain access to Saul's life because of his continual disobedience and impenitence. God has ultimate control over the universe and many deeds are attributed to Him though He may not be primarily responsible for them. Since nothing happens in the universe without His permission, religious people often attribute all activities to Him, both

good and bad. But, God cannot be tempted with evil and He tempts no one with evil (James 1:13).

Lack of prompt acknowledgment and confession of sin opened the door for demonic oppression in Saul's life. He carried a guilty conscience and was full of guilt. He was also afraid of the future because Samuel had pronounced that his kingdom would not continue. Saul was also afraid of being exposed. He wanted Samuel to cover up his weakness and failure lest he lost honor before the people. Despite the divine sentence on him, he was more concerned about retaining honor before the people (1 Samuel 15:30).

Meanwhile, the servants of Saul suggested an immediate remedy for the torment of their master. They suggested the use of music to soothe and relieve Saul anytime the evil spirit tormented him. It shows that ancient men recognized the therapeutic effect of good music. Godly music has healing power. It refreshes and edifies. But ungodly music has evil influence. It promotes ungodliness. Nebuchadnezzar used evil music to promote idol worship, but David, Jehoshaphat, Elisha, Paul and Silas employed godly music to achieve great things for God. Believers are admonished to use music in a positive way (2 Kings 3:14,15; 2 Chronicles 20:21-24; Daniel 3:4-7; Acts 16:25,26; Colossians 3:16).

**Question 5: From our text and other scriptures, state the benefits of good music.**

Saul accepted that a skilfull player of harp be sought and brought to him. Consequently, one of the servants recommended David. Eventually, Saul loved David and retained him to become his armorbearer. Thus, David progressed from being a mere rural shepherd boy to a palace hero. His gift made a way for him and his training for kingship was on course.

The description of David, at this time, indicated that he had grown and developed physically in skill and grace since his initial anointing by Samuel. He was described as skilful in music, a mighty man of valour, a man of war, prudent, handsome and had the presence of God

with him. But above all, God said he was a man after His own heart (1 Samuel 16:18; 13:14).

Whereas Saul was a king chosen by popular demand, David was God's own choice against all human parameters. Saul ended in disaster and his kingdom was terminated, but David's kingdom continued.

### **DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	1 Peter	3	Job	22-23
TUE	"	4-5	"	24-25
WED	2 Peter	1	"	27-28
THUR	"	2-3	"	29-30
FRI	1 John	1-2	"	31
SAT	"	3-4	"	32-33
SUN	"	5	"	34-35

### **END OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES**

# BEGINNING OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

## 734 Lesson

## THE NEW LIFESTYLE OF BELIEVERS

**MEMORY VERSE** “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24).

### **TEXT: Ephesians 4:17-32**

**T**he Scripture identifies two separate kingdoms in this world – the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light – and they are mutually exclusive. Satan and his children belong to the kingdom of darkness. At the other divide are Christians, called out of the world and translated into God’s kingdom through Christ. By virtue of their translation, they become the light of the world.

Christ said, “**Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid**” (Matthew 5:14).

To come into God’s light, sinners need to acknowledge their guilt, repent and forsake the works of darkness. Such must believe the gospel so that the light of Christ’s glorious gospel can shine in their heart. They must renounce every fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness and come out of every evil relationship. All associations with ungodly people, workers of iniquity, demonic social clubs, criminals, and occult groups must be renounced. The result will be a life cleansed from sin and brought into light and conformity with Christ. Consequently, God’s divine nature will be imparted and implanted in the heart while the converted sinner begins a new life in Christ.

**Question 1: Describe the life of citizens in the two kingdoms.**

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLD LIFE** (Ephesians 4:17-19; Colossians 1:13; Ecclesiastes 2:1; Jeremiah 4:22; Proverbs 4:19; Acts 26:18)

Our text begins with a portrait of the old life. “**This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye**

**henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart**" (Ephesians 4:17,18). Sinners, backsliders and workers of iniquity have their manner and way of life. Every unconverted person carries the nature of sin which tends to do evil naturally. They are under the influence and dominion of Satan who remote-controls their behavior and dictates their lifestyle. Until Christ comes in, every sinner is a slave to sin and Satan and subjected to life in the kingdom of darkness.

The Scripture says, they walk **"in the vanity of their mind"**. All that catches their fancy is vanity upon vanity. They are filled with the lust of the eyes, the pride of life and pleasure. Their lives are occupied only with things that gratify self, the flesh, Satan and the world. Like Solomon of old, captured and conquered by things of this world, they are preoccupied **"with mirth"** and **"pleasure"**; which amount to **"vanity"** (Ecclesiastes 2:1). Two, they have the understanding darkened and cannot comprehend spiritual things. Darkness is a symbol of sin, misery, ignorance and death, and sinners are under the power of darkness and dominion of sin. **"The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble"** (Proverbs 4:19). An individual whose understanding is darkened cannot appreciate the truth about morals, godliness and righteousness. Such would rather grope in delusion and stumble into perdition.

Third, they are aliens to godliness and the godly nature because they are separated from the life of God. Ability to do good like our heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ is lacking in them. **"The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good"** (Psalms 36:3). **"For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge"** (Jeremiah 4:22).

Fourth, the text also says that they are ignorant; not that they are unaware of the grace of God that brings salvation (which has appeared to all), but after they had

heard, chose to remain ignorant of the saving grace of Christ. Fifth, the Apostle talks of the “**blindness of their heart**”. Greek scholars said, ‘hardness’ is a better word for the word translated ‘blindness’. This means sinners became blind due to the hardness of their heart.

Sixth, they are “**past feeling**”. Due to the hardness of their heart, they have lost every feeling of empathy, love, kindness and care. Their consciences have been seared with hot iron . Seventh, they are given to lasciviousness, carnality, sensual lust and wantonness. They are sold “**to work all uncleanness with greediness**”. Such are the characteristics of people still living the old life of sin.

**Question 2: What should sinners do to be translated from the old life to the new?**

Until Christ comes to dwell in the heart of man, such would remain in total darkness. At conversion, sinners are transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. There will be no more “**fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...**” (Ephesians 5:11). They become citizens of a new kingdom under a new King with new rules, laws, principles and practices. This change occurs at the new birth, by which the repentant sinner passes from the empire of sin, ignorance and misery to that of righteousness, holiness, godliness and knowledge of the truth. There will be a transition, a translation and a transformation.

**CALL FROM THE OLD LIFE INTO THE NEW**  
(Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:8,9; Romans 12:2; 8:5-9; John 8:12)

After describing the nature of the old life of sin, Paul the apostle goes on to call the believer’s attention to the new life. “**But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus**” (Ephesians 4:20,21). Now that the believer has been transformed through the truth that resides only in Christ, he or she is expected to “**put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of**” their mind. Our old life of sin is pictured as a garment that we had

worn since birth; now that the miracle of conversion has taken place, we can no longer wear it. It must be put off, discarded and destroyed. **“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds”** (Colossians 3:8,9).

The Christian who is indwelt by Christ, the Light of the world, must separate from all works of darkness and radiate the light of Christ. He cannot afford to continue in the old way of life. His holiness of life must be unmistakable. Daniel shone like a star in a dark sky, so clearly, that his adversaries could not find any fault in him (Daniel 6:4). The children of Israel could not establish any offence against Samuel when he called them to witness against him (1 Samuel 12:3,4).

Moreover, the believer is called to be renewed in the spirit to keep the mind fresh and to guarantee the currency of the Christian experience. True believers cannot afford to rely on the experience of yesteryears because the grace of yesterday cannot survive the challenges of today. We must renew our commitment and refresh our convictions until the day of Christ. **“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”** (Romans 12:2).

<p><b>Question 3: Mention the works of the flesh that the converted sinner is expected to put off.</b></p>
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Afterwards, the believer is called on to **“put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”** (Ephesians 4:24). The new nature is recreated to reflect righteousness and genuine holiness. To the outside dark world, a believer is a beacon.

Christians are to reflect the gospel light in a world where there is moral darkness and spiritual ignorance. Our light must not be put under the bushel but must be made visible for all to see. Jesus commanded **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”** (Matthew 5:16). It behooves every child of God



to lighten their environment and neighborhood with their godly lifestyle. To everyone, we must show mercy, kindness, humility, forgiveness and love. As we relate with our associates, fellow citizens and mingle with the people of the world in business transaction, in schools, or on duties of citizens, we must let the light of our new lifestyle shine for all to see.

**Question 4: Point out some differences between the old man and the new man.**

**CONTRAST BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW LIFE AND SUNDRY EXHORTATIONS** (Ephesians 4:25-32; Mark 3:5; Psalm 7:11; Ecclesiastes 7:9; Psalms 37:8; Proverbs 4:18)

In order to reinforce his admonition to the believers, the Apostle Paul states in practical terms what the new life ought to be in contradistinction to the old. When we come to Christ, He makes us brand new creatures. It is not an old life refurbished or redecorated but a complete change. **“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another”** (Ephesians 4:25). The new man has done away with old works of sin and switched over to another life befitting his profession. Speaking the truth should be his hallmark as against former practice of lying; he must not lie in any form.

Then it says, **“be ye angry and sin not”**. If a believer is to be angry at all, let it be against sin and the appearances thereof. Christians are not expected to be inflamed by the evil passion of indignation, as such will be tantamount to committing sin. We sin when anger leads us into violent, vehement, outrageous and mischievous disposition. Sinful anger seeks to gratify the brutish passion and show our resentment. It is usually followed with a vengeful spirit to seek the hurt of those we are displeased with. It is hatred in the bud which culminates in murder. If there is any occasion to express displeasure at wrong doing, it must be done without committing sin so that we do not **“give place to the devil”**. Believers must take care to bridle their passion. **“Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools”** (Ecclesiastes 7:9).

However, saints must rise with holy indignation when God’s law is spurned, or when scriptural standard of holiness and His majesty ridiculed, and corruption/sinful activities are rife in the house of God. An example of how to be angry and not sin was manifested by Christ: He “...**looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts...**” (Mark 3:5).

**Question 5: What are the proofs of a new life in Christ?**

The proof that one has had an encounter with the Lord manifests in a transformed life. After conversion, erstwhile thieves will steal no more but engage in profitable labor and become a blessing to others. He will not misuse his tongue by way of corrupt communication. Vulgar or foul language will not proceed from his mouth. Backbiting, tale-bearing, whispering, slander, defamation and calumny which eclipse the radiance of God’s glory in a believer will all be gone. He will begin and continue to speak words that edify others. Every act that can grieve the Holy Spirit such as bitterness, anger, clamor, wrath, and evil speaking he avoids like a plague. He forgives everyone who offends him freely and fully. **“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”** (Ephesians 4:32). Absence of these spiritual qualities shows that the professing believer needs salvation.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	2&3	John	Job	36-37
TUE		Jude	“	38-39
WED	Rev.	1-2	“	40-42
THUR	“	3-4	Psalms	1-4
FRI	“	5-6	“	5-7
SAT	“	7-8	“	8-10
SUN	“	9-10	“	11-14

# 735 Lesson

## BELIEVERS' WALK AND WISDOM

**TEXT: Ephesians 5:1-21**

**MEMORY VERSE:** "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15,16).

In continuation of Apostle Paul's admonition to believers to ensure they walk worthy of their calling, he enjoins them in our text to be followers of God, as dear children. He makes it very clear to those who profess true faith in Christ that they cannot continue to walk the old life, live the old way, keep the same old company of sinners and partake of the world's sinful dainties. There are lifestyles that the believer should not be found to be living. As children of God, love, purity, godliness and wisdom should be the hallmarks of those who expect to have inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

**CALL TO WALK IN LOVE AND PURITY** (Ephesians 5:1-7; Colossians 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 1:18; 12:3)

The Apostle enjoined believers to be followers of God as dear children and walk in love. Those who would be followers of God must become His children through repentance from sin and faith in Christ. Without the initial experience of salvation, a person cannot obey the call to follow God.

**Question 1: What are the godly attributes that believers are called to imbibe in our text?**

Believers are called to demonstrate Christ-like sacrificial love. The command is to love our neighbors as Christ loves us. Walking in love will therefore demand that we use our human and material resources for the benefit of others. Obviously, the call to walk in love also agrees with the demand to walk in purity like Christ.

Christ-like love is pure. Immorality and covetousness are not the expressions of true love. So, Paul the apostle instructs that there should be no hint of sexual impurity, greed, coarse jokes, offensive language and obscenity among believers. Though the world tolerates and celebrates these vicious sins, believers must detest them. Saints of God have nothing to do with filthy and foolish talking, polluting stories and jesting because they are unbecoming of saints. They are expected to be free from stains associated with followers of Satan.

Anyone who continues in sin, regardless of his position or rank in the church, is not a child of God. Paul made this so clear when he said, “**For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God**” (Ephesians 5:5). Greedy people who covet money, property, position, privilege, promotion, attention, whether in the world or in the church, are classified as idolaters. The object they covet has displaced God in their hearts and consequently, like the immoral person, they are excluded from God’s kingdom.

**Question 2: Explain how people get into spiritual deception and the way out.**

But there are people who have been deceived and also go about deceiving others concerning this truth. They do not accept the spiritual truth that immoral and covetous people have no part in the present and future kingdom of Christ. Such deceivers indulge in the vices and teach others that it is not a serious matter. Somehow, they have believed a lie that someone can live in immorality and yet get to heaven. In effect, they teach the doctrine of eternal security, call sin another name, such as human weakness, and play down the reality of God’s wrath against sin. But Paul says, “**Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, Be not ye therefore partakers with them**” (Ephesians 5:6,7). The wrath of God is a real threat upon the profligate sinners as well as the fallen saints who refuse to confess,

repent, forsake and retribute their sinful action. The only way to avoid being partakers of God's judgment is to avoid sin.

**COMMAND TO WALK IN THE LIGHT** (Ephesians 5:8-14; Psalm 89:15; Matthew 5:14-16; John 12:35,36; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:8-11)

A crucial aspect of the believer's walk is the command to walk as children of light. Before conversion, a person is said to be in darkness. The situation of a sinner is even worse than merely walking in darkness: he is darkness personified. Darkness signified moral perversion and ignorance of God's word and will. Clearly, sinners being in darkness implies they are ignorant of God, engrossed in moral perversions and also cause others to stumble. They live in gross darkness of sins and grope steadily unknowingly towards the pit of hell.

**Question 3: What is the implication of believers being light?**

After conversion, believers become light and they walk in the light. Walking in the light means they do not carry on in their former lifestyle of sin; rather, they live in purity and obedience to the will of God. As light-bearers, they enlighten the darkness of others. Jesus said of His followers: **“ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid”** (Matthew 5:14). Believers act as light by preaching the gospel both through their lifestyle and words. The fruit of goodness, righteousness and truth in the life of believers can convict and open the eyes of sinners and lead them out of darkness into the light.

Contrary to God's design, many believers are hiding their light under the bushel of worldliness and compromise. They fail to realize that their conversion to Christ places a double responsibility on them not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness and to let their light reprove or expose darkness. Believers' lives should be so transparent and radiant that sinners they come in contact with will see the true condition of their own hearts, repent of sin and avoid its present and eternal consequences.

Walking in the light is closely associated with walking in love. **“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes”** (1 John 2:10,11). Anyone that harbours hatred towards another person is still in darkness, just like those who commit immorality, the covetous and evil speakers. Every form of sin is regarded as a work of darkness in the sight of God, and the needful step to take is to repent of them and begin to walk in the light. **“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance”** (Psalm 89:15).

**CAUTION TO WALK IN WISDOM AND SOBRIETY:**  
(Ephesians 5:15-21; Colossians 1:9; 1 Peter 5:8)

Apostle Paul calls the attention of believers to the necessity of walking with circumspection and wisdom. Believers must watch how they live and avoid putting themselves in harm’s way. They must not live carelessly as if there is no danger or possibility of falling. **“A prudent man forseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished”** (Proverbs 22:3).

**Question 4: Why should believers walk circumspectly and what are the main features involved?**

One reason believers need to be vigilant and prudent in their walk is that the devil is on the prowl, looking for their unguarded moment so that he can strike. **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”** (1 Peter 5:8). A careless believer can easily fall into Satan’s trap and be dragged back into darkness. But when there is watchfulness, prayerfulness and prudence, the enemy cannot succeed in his bid.

Coupled with the caution to walk circumspectly is the necessity of redeeming the time because the days are evil. To redeem the time means to manage our time very well, to make the most use of every opportunity to preach the gospel and do God’s will. In practical terms, it means working for God when it is convenient and

when it is not, but at the same time not neglecting our basic responsibilities at home and place of work. The coming of the Lord is so near and the rate at which Satan is herding multitudes of people to hell is alarming. Multitudes die daily as a result of organized crime, natural disasters, strange sicknesses and global insurgency. The days in which we live are evil indeed and believers need to arise and preach the gospel so that many can be rescued from a gloomy eternity.

Believers walking in wisdom must also prove and understand what the will of the Lord is so that they can do it. In every situation, a believer must find out what God wants him or her to do. There are some areas where the Bible clearly spells out the will of God; but at other times, it is not specifically stated and one must find out by prayer, application of scriptural principles and the leading of the Holy Spirit. For instance, the Bible has clearly shown it is the will of God for sinners to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3,4; John 3:16); believers to be sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3); to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18). But when it comes to the issue of who to marry, choice of career, where to live and other personal details of life, a believer must learn what the will of God is by prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit. Paul prayed for new believers that they “**might be filled with the knowledge of [God’s] will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding**” (Colossians 1:9). Even in seemingly simple matters, a believer must find out what is the will of God and obey (1 Kings 13:7-24; 2 Kings 4:8-10,15,16,20-27).

To be able to work worthy of their calling, Paul the apostle said believers must be filled with the Spirit. This is quite different from the initial experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit should be a continuous and daily experience, necessary for believers to be led by the Holy Spirit. To explain this experience, Paul used the analogy of people who are intoxicated with wine. Certainly it is God’s will that believers should avoid intoxicating substances, such as alcohol and harmful drugs, because they lead to unruly behaviors (Genesis 9:21; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35). But Paul used the illustration in contrast with being filled

with the Holy Spirit. People who are drunk with wine come under the influence of alcohol. Believers are expected, so to say, to be intoxicated with the Holy Spirit always such that everything they do will be influenced by the Holy Spirit.

**Question 5: What are the visible effects of being Spirit-filled?**

When believers are filled with the Holy Spirit, they will be led by Him and they will produce visible fruits that glorify God. One, there will be mutual edification among the believers through singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Inspired singing will result in spiritual strength and refreshment for all believers. Two, being filled with the Holy Spirit will enable individual believers to make heartfelt melody to the Lord. Spirit-led singing results in melody to God and not to men. Three, it results in a life of thankfulness and gratitude. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to give thanks always for all things at all times, instead of complaining and feeling self-pity when the going gets tough (Acts 16:25; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13). Four, there will be mutual submission in the fear of God. Instead of selfish ambitions and struggle for pre-eminence, believers will be able to reckon with others better than themselves and submit to one another (Philippians 2:3).

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Rev.	11-12	Psalms	15-17
TUE	“	13-14	“	18
WED	“	15-16	“	19-21
THUR	“	17-18	“	22-24
FRI	“	19-20	“	25-28
SAT	“	21-22	“	29-31
SUN	Matt.	1-2	“	32-33



# 736 Lesson

## PRECEPTS FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Ephesians 5:33)

### **TEXT: Ephesians 5:22-33**

**P**aul the apostle, in our text, highlights the godly attributes that should characterize believers in a marriage relationship. He focuses on the duties of the husband to the wife and *vice versa*. This lesson captures the interdependence of both the husband and the wife, revealing that the true measure of a Christian home is not its abundant material possessions but the quality of love, care, submission and fellowship that exist in it. The Apostle further highlights that the union between husband and wife is a picture of the relationship that exists between Christ and the Church. The husband who is cognisant of this truth would not want to misrepresent Christ in the home; neither would the wife act in insubordination to him. Those who approve unscriptural unions such as homosexuality, polygamy, divorce and re-marriage, cohabitation and bestiality must have a rethink.

**Question 1: From the text, why are precepts for marriage union given prominence?**

**THE WIFE’S LOYALTY AND SUBMISSION TO THE HUSBAND** (Ephesians 5:21-24; 1 Corinthians 14:34; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 3:1-6; 5:5)

Paul the apostle first addressed the subject of the wife’s duty of loyalty and loving submission to the husband. God, in His infinite wisdom, has appointed man, the husband, as the head of the family while the wife is the body. As such, she is commanded to submit to her husband. The violation of these divine precepts will result in a dysfunctional marriage with all kinds of negative consequences.

Though Christianity recognizes the woman as a joint heir of the grace of life with her husband, it does not release her from the God-given role of submission to him. The reason is, the submission of the wife to her husband reflects her submission to Christ. **“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing”** (Ephesians 5:23,24).

This duty of submitting does not depend on age difference, the character of the husband or his status, whether he is educated, experienced, exposed, rich or not. The issue here is not a question of comparative advantage but of divine order and arrangement. Even if the husband is not saved, the wife still has the duty of winning him by her submissiveness and meekness (1 Peter 3:1,2)

**Question 2: Point out the characteristics of a wife's genuine submission to her husband.**

It needs be made clear here that submission of the wife is not servitude or subjugation, rather it is a voluntary and loving surrender of herself to the authority of her husband in the fear of God. Note these truths concerning this biblical submission of a wife to her husband: one, it is to her own husband. Two, her submission is as unto the Lord, complete and total, but limited to only those commands that are lawful and in line with God's word. Three, it is deliberate and voluntary. Four, the submission that is scriptural is also sincere, done cheerfully and with pure motive. Sinful women practise hypocritical submission in order to obtain favor from their husbands but Christian women should have noble motivation for their own submission. Five, genuine submission consists of reverence for and obedience to the husband. Reverence largely describes the inner disposition of the wife while submitting but obedience is the outward manifestation of her submission. A woman may obey without reverence but that would be an unprofitable submission.

The Scripture teaches that a wife who submits to her own husband pleases him (1 Corinthians 7:34); obeys him, (Titus 2:5) submits to his rule and seeks his permission (Genesis 3:16); accepts correction (1 Timothy 2:12) avoids nagging, destructive criticism and fault-finding (Proverbs 21:9,19); proves to be help-meet indeed (Genesis 2:18); corrects him in love if he is going contrary to God. Sarah was submissive to Abraham, but on the matter of Hagar and Ishmael, she corrected him. At first, Abraham was reluctant but God said unto him: **“Abraham, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called”** (Genesis 21:9-12).

Many women experience difficulty in submitting to their husband as prescribed by the Scripture and there are several possible reasons for this. One, pride. A woman who is proud because of her position, situation or possession will not be able to submit to a husband who may probably be less endowed. Two, imperfect love. If there is no true love, a woman may struggle with the divine command to submit to her own husband. Three, worldliness and carnality dries up the milk of mercy and love for her husband. Four, backsliding. A woman who has lost her relationship with God becomes graceless; she cannot obey His word. Five, influence of outsiders who live contrary to God’s word will also affect the submission of a godly woman to her husband because evil communication corrupts good manners.

**THE HUSBAND’S LOVING AND SACRIFICIAL CARE FOR THE WIFE** (Ephesians 5:25; Genesis 2:24; 24:26; Proverbs 5:18,19; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7)

As the wife is commanded to submit herself to her husband, the Lord commands the husband to love his wife as He loves the Church. **“Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”** (Ephesians 5:25). It is obvious here that the love of Christ for the Church is the standard and model for the husband’s love for his wife.

**Question 3: State the qualities of love the husband is expected to show to his wife.**

The Christ-like love God commands the husband to have for his wife is basically sacrificial or self-giving, not selfish or self-seeking (Ephesians 5:25). Two, it is a saving love, not destructive love that is sensual, sentimental and founded on worldly principles. Three, the love is considerate. It takes into consideration the delicate nature of the wife and treats her with care and honor. The Bible uses the imagery of a weaker vessel to describe the delicate nature of the woman (1 Peter 3:7). Four, the husband's love is tender and not harsh, cruel or bitter (Colossians 3:19). Five, it is cheerful and joyful (Proverbs 5:18,19). The husband who truly loves his wife will rejoice over her as Christ rejoices over the church (Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 62:5). Six, it is an enduring love. The love of Jesus for the Church is everlasting; so also the kind of love the husband should have for his wife should be unending and unailing (1 Corinthians 13:8; Jeremiah 31:3).

**Question 4: What are the primary ways a Christian husband can show love to his wife?**

Looking at the love of Jesus for the Church, a husband's love goes beyond physical care for the wife. It includes giving emotional support, spiritual nurture and holistic plan on how to help the wife become all that God intends her to be. A Christian husband is expected to show love to his wife by providing for her (1 Timothy 5:3); pleasing her (1 Corinthians 7:37); protecting her (1 Peter 3:7); praying for her (Genesis 24:67; 25:21); partnering and being present with her (John 17:24); planning for her (Jeremiah 29:11); and preparing her for heaven by teaching and nourishing her spiritually (1 Corinthians 14:35).

It is the sacrificial and thoughtful love of the husband that makes submission an easy duty for the wife. Someone has likened this to priming a pump that brings water from a well. The pump brings more water than the volume used in priming it. When the husband loves his wife, he gets love and submission in return.

But there is another dimension to the love of a husband for his wife: he should love the wife as his own body.

The wife, being one flesh with her husband, should be treated as he would treat himself.

**CHRIST’S ULTIMATE PURPOSE FOR THE CHURCH:** (Ephesians 5:26,27; 1:4; Song of Solomon 4:7; Isaiah 62:3; Jeremiah 33:9; Ezekiel 36:25; Colossians 1:22-28; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:22; 2 Peter 3:14)

The Church is the bride of Christ. He purchased her at a very great price because of His love for her. He died and rose again to secure her. This sacrificial love of Christ has an immediate purpose as well as an ultimate one.

His ultimate purpose is to present the church to Himself holy and righteous in an unending union. **“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word”** (Ephesians 5:26). Christ’s prayer to the Father at the twilight of His earthly ministry reveals this ultimate desire (John 17:17). To achieve this, He is presently preparing His bride by washing, cleansing, nourishing and cherishing her. The sanctification experience is His desire and prayer for every believer (1 Thessalonians 4:3). He wants to make the Church spotless and glorious ahead of the final union at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

**Question 5: How does Jesus Christ show His love to the church?**

This example of Christ’s love for the church and the submissive response of the church to Christ’s loving care are what husbands and wives are called to emulate in their marriage.

Jesus wants His bride to be cleansed from all outward and inward unfitness. For that reason, He cleanses the church with His blood and the water of His word. Every sinner must exercise faith in the blood of Jesus for cleansing from the guilt and stains of sin. Having become part of the body or bride of Christ, the believer is expected to constantly hear, read and study the word of God to remain clean and pure (Psalm 119:9,11; John 15:3). Regular intake of God’s word and prayer empowers the believer to be Christ-like. Every believer, whether married or unmarried, should endeavor to be part of the universal, rapturable Church Jesus is coming for.

Without scriptural submission to the husband and Christ-like love for the wife, no believer who is married has any hope of living with Christ in the end. God’s grace is sufficient for those who are willing and obedient.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Matt.	3-4	Psalms	34-35
TUE	“	5	“	36-37
WED	“	6	“	38-40
THUR	“	7-8	“	41-43
FRI	“	9	“	44-45
SAT	“	10	“	46-48
SUN	“	11	“	49-50

# 737 Lesson

## BELIEVERS' RESPONSIBILITIES AT HOME AND WORK

**MEMORY VERSE:** "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (Ephesians 6:7,8)

### **TEXT: Ephesians 6:1-9**

The preceding chapter dwelt on the institution of marriage which is the basic unit of the church. The idea is, if we get it right in the family, we are most likely to have a healthy church as well as a functional society. When the family is Bible-based, upbringing of children, brotherly love and healthy relationship among brethren and neighbors which form the focus of this lesson will not be difficult. The Lord can help us overcome all challenges that confront our homes so that all members will be holy, happy and healthy. Godly conduct is expected of Christians in and outside the family circle. Such lifestyle will positively influence others. Good families make a good society while dysfunctional homes make a bad one. Wrong values, attitudes and perspectives imbibed from dysfunctional homes are always carried over to public institutions and the entire society.

The main thrust of Apostle Paul's message in our text is that a true Christian must manifest his new lifestyle both in the family and in the workplace. Whether he is a child, father or mother in the family; an employee, employer, junior officer or senior officer at work, the believer must display virtues of the new life in Christ. Genuine believers should avoid widespread attitudes of disobedience to constituted authority at home or workplace, neglect of parental responsibilities, eyeservice, overbearing and harsh disposition to subordinates, unfair and ruthless treatment of others.

**GODLY CHARACTER AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN AT HOME** (Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20; Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 22:6; 23:13,14, 22; 29:17 Matthew 15:4; Deuteronomy 5:16; Malachi 1:6; Mark 7:10; 1 Samuel 3:13)

The Scripture teaches that children develop in at least, four areas. We see this in the example of Jesus who grew in wisdom (mentally), stature (physically), favor with God (spiritually), and favor with mankind (socially) (Luke 2:52). When children enter this world, it is our responsibilities as parents to inculcate the right values and norms in them.

Children are commanded to obey and honor their parents (Ephesians 6:1; Exodus 20:12). To obey means to do exactly what they are asked to do and not trying to dodge, delay, hesitate or prolong the command of their parents. However, their obedience must be “**...in the Lord...**”. In obeying their parents, children should have the fear of God in mind and must not do anything to undermine the teaching of the Scripture. They should, with respect, do those things that will honor God while carrying out the directives of their parents. That means where the command or request of a parent conflicts with God’s command, we should rather obey God than men (Acts 5:29; Exodus 1:17).

**Question 1: To what extent should Christian children obey their parents?**

“**Honor thy father and mother**” means children should respect their parents. Even when they are not believers in Christ, it is still expected of children to respect and to love their parents. There is a blessing attached to honoring and obeying parents: “**That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth**” (Ephesians 6:3).

As a child, your honor and obedience should not be limited to only your biological parents. You should also honor and obey those who act as your parents in the home, church, school and community. Children are to honor elderly men and women they come in contact with. This is acceptable in the sight of the Lord.



But parents need to remember that they have responsibilities towards their children if they would reap the fruits of blissful parenthood. To make it easy for their children to honor and obey them, they have to provide for and train them. The Scripture commands every parent(s) to **“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”** (Proverbs 22:6). Of course, the key to that is for them to love the Lord Jesus Christ and be under the Holy Spirit’s influence. It is parents’ responsibility, therefore, to teach their children how to yield their lives to God. Negligence or failure in this regard is dangerous. **“For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not”** (1 Samuel 3:13).

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURAL PARENTING:**  
(Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21; Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19; Psalm 78:4; Proverbs 19:18; 22:6; 29:17)

In fulfilling their responsibilities at home, parents are expected to teach their children (Deuteronomy 6:7), train them (Proverbs 22:6), provide for them (2 Corinthians 12:14; 1 Timothy 5:8), nurture them (Ephesians 6:4), control them (1 Timothy 3:4), love them (Titus 2:4), correct them (Proverbs 13:24) and instruct them (Deuteronomy 4:9; Proverbs 22:6). But in doing these, the Bible warns against provoking children to wrath (Ephesians 6:4). As parents, we should avoid anger, harshness, bad language, malice or vindictiveness in correcting our children.

When children go against ethical principles at home, church, school or the society at large, they should be disciplined. Discipline implies training, which involves rules and regulations enforced by rewards and punishment. We set the standard, follow it, and then hold our children accountable to it. If they meet it, we reward them, if they violate it, we punish them. That way, we will be helping them see the consequences of their actions. To discipline a child, we need not use abusive language or corporal punishment that will lead to injury. It should also not be a denial of legitimate rights like clothing, food, education or apportioning of

good things in the family. We are to nurture children in the ways and fear of God.

It is also the responsibility of parents to lead their children to know the Lord early in life. By their godly example, ceaseless intercession, clear and simple presentation of the gospel, parents can lead their children to Christ. As parents, we must walk the talk as we seek to train our children because we cannot expect them to obey us if we are walking in disobedience to God. Our children will be provoked to wrath if we fail in our obligations to them.

Christian families must live according to the teaching of God's word, guidance and power of His Spirit. The husband must love his wife dearly; the wife is to respect her husband and the two are to be sensitive in raising their children in the things of Christ. If we do that, our children will be the blessing, joy, comfort, and consolation that God intended.

**Question 2: Mention negative ways in which some parents treat their children?**

Many believing parents provoke their children and treat them in negative ways which include: over-protection, fencing them in, never trusting or giving them opportunity to develop a healthy sense of self esteem. Eventually, they become maladjusted and have personality problems which manifest in various ways later in life. Some parents show favouritism or make undue comparison between their children and others. Each child is unique and a gift from God. When we compare, the less-talented or less-expressive child will be devastated. He or she will tend to become discouraged, resentful, withdrawn and bitter. We should pray and work hard to develop in our children godly virtues and not vices.

**GODLY SERVICE AND INTEGRITY OF RESPONSIBLE SERVANTS:** (Ephesians 6:5-8; 1 Timothy 6:1; Philippians 2:12; 1 Chronicles 29:17; Colossians 3:22; Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18; Matthew 24:45-51)

In New Testament times, slavery was a common practice throughout the Roman Empire. Undoubtedly, many church members were either servants or had servants as part of their households. People became slaves by being captured in war, being sold to pay debts or being kidnapped. Paul's counsel about how servants should act does not imply that he approved of the institution of slavery, but it teaches how the relationship between servants and masters should be guided by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul's advice still has application today, even though slavery, as was practiced in his day, is no longer common. For masters or employers who would not faithfully pay their servants or employees for goods and services rendered, the advice is still very instructive. He also has in mind men who are unkind, demanding and inconsiderate of their subordinates. Irrespective of the situation, servants and employees should consistently be faithful in service, **"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart"** (Ephesians 6:6).

**Question 3: How should servants and employees discharge their duties?**

In the discharge of their duties, servants should take note of the following: one, they must reverence those who are over them, fearing to displease them. Two, they must be sincere in their obedience, serving in singleness of heart. Three, they should focus their attention on Jesus Christ in all service that they perform. When servants perform their duties with an eye on the Lord, they become acceptable service to Him also. To have an eye on Christ is to remember that He sees everything and is ever present with them. Four, they must not serve their masters with eyeservice, that is, only when their master's eye is upon them. They must be conscientious in the discharge of their duty because their Master in heaven is watching. Five, they must do all things

cheerfully, “**doing the will of God from the heart**”. Six, faithful servants must trust God for reward, “**Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord**”. Though his master on earth may neglect or abuse him, he shall certainly be rewarded by the Lord.

**Question 4: As Christians, what should characterize our services in the place of work?**

Believers should be properly guided as to the way and manner they carry out their responsibilities in the workplace. They should shun indolence and lateness to work.

**BROTHERLY LOVE AND HUMILITY DISPLAYED BY MASTERS** (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1; 1 Timothy 6:2; Romans 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Peter 3:8; 1 John 3:14)

Whatever position or privilege we enjoy in the society comes from God. Therefore, the slave-master mentality should not becloud our minds to the extent that we begin to treat fellow brothers or sisters as second class citizens. As masters, we should not lord it over the poor (Proverbs 22:7).

**Question 5: What should be the right attitude of masters to their servants?**

Rich Christian masters should see themselves as custodians of God’s riches which they should use for His glory. Acknowledging this fact will help them develop the right attitude as they relate with their servants or employees. They should understand that they owe it a duty to help the poor or less privileged servants; act in a loving manner to those working under them; pay them salaries as and when due. They should not sit over the wages of their workers or deny them promotion (Genesis 31:7; Leviticus 19:13; Malachi 3:5). They should remember that God will judge all unrighteous dealing. Finally, they should recognize that God is the ultimate Master and Judge who we shall give account of our stewardship on the last day.

Genuine love will therefore make us to strive for unity always; be patient with and have consideration for one another; avoid hurting people or doing wrong to others; be kind and courteous. The Lord said; **“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”** (John 13:35). We must love one another sincerely, fervently and genuinely.

## DAILY BIBLE READING

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Matt.	12	Psalms	51-54
TUE	“	13	“	55-57
WED	“	14-15	“	58-60
THUR	“	16-17	“	61-64
FRI	“	18	“	65-66
SAT	“	19-20	“	67-68
SUN	“	21	“	69-70

# 738 Lesson

## COMPLETE ARMOR FOR SPIRITUAL WARFARE

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11).

### **TEXT: Ephesians 6:10-24**

**P**aul the apostle had established great truths about the great redemption that Christ has purchased for us on the cross and the life that should characterize our calling as Christians in the preceding verses of this chapter. The great price of our redemption invokes a responsibility upon us to maintain it at all cost. Thus, the Apostle admonishes Christians to “**be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might**” (Ephesians 6:10). The admonition is apt because our adversary, the devil, does not leave any stone unturned in ensuring that the believer is brought into bondage again and eventually destroyed.

Peter succinctly captures the preoccupation of the devil in the world; he “**as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour**” (1 Peter 5:8). Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ sums up the devil’s mission on earth as seeking “**to steal, and to kill, and to destroy**” (John 10:10). All these explain the reasons we must fight in the strength of the Lord and “**resist [the devil] steadfast in the faith**” (1 Peter 5:9).

**Question 1: Why should a believer be strong in the Lord?**

**REALITY OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE** (Ephesians 6:10-12; Job 1:6-11; 2:1-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Daniel 10:12,13; 1 Peter 5:8,9)

Many Christians are ignorant of the fact that we are constantly fighting a spiritual battle with a vicious enemy who will not give up easily. There are two kingdoms in this world, the kingdom of light headed by our Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of darkness headed by the devil. The moment one gives his life to the Lord, he is engaged in constant battle with the forces of darkness,

whether he knows it or not. **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”** (verse 12). The words, **“we wrestle”**, is in the simple present tense, signifying constant fight with an enemy who never gives up. But it is not only the devil that we fight with: we also fight his cohorts organized in hierarchies – principalities, powers, rulers of darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places. Just as he has spiritual agents, so does he have human agents like the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28:7) and Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8).

Right from the Garden of Eden, this fight has been on. The devil tempted Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-6), sought to destroy Job (Job 1:6-11; 2:1-13), stood against David to number Israel (1 Chronicles 21:1), resisted Joshua the high priest (Zechariah 3:1,2), tempted Jesus our Lord (Matthew 4:1-11), desired to have Peter to sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31), and hindered Paul in his missionary work (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

**Question 2: What devices does the devil use to fight Christians today?**

The devil used – and is still using – many devices and stratagems to execute his war against the believer’s soul. He used temptation against Joseph (Genesis 39:3-12), the love of the world against Demas (2 Timothy 4:10), discouragement against Elijah (1 Kings 19:9,10), sickness against Job (Job 2:1-13), the love of money against Judas (Matthew 26:15), false doctrine against Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Timothy 2:17,18), lust of the flesh against Samson (Judges 16:1), love of position against Diotrephes (3 John 9), and so on. We must therefore be wise against his antics and watch our desires, inclinations and actions. We must avoid secret sin and be temperate in our desires, as he uses what is uppermost in our hearts to tempt and bring us into bondage. The way to overcome is to ensure that he has nothing in us to latch onto (John 14:30).

**RESOURCES FOR OUR SPIRITUAL WARFARE:**  
(Ephesians 6:13-20; Hebrews 4:12; Romans 13:12-14; 2 Corinthians 6:7; Psalm 91:4; Luke 18:1)

Even though the believer is faced with constant battle against the forces of darkness, there are resources that could be used to assure victory. Actually, resources are means that one uses to accomplish a desired goal or objective. The resources are our armaments with which we fight against the devil. Six of such armaments are listed in the passage: the girdle or belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, shoes of the gospel, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. The imagery here is that of the kits for the Roman army of old. Since the believer is called to be a soldier, he should also be so kitted. The pieces of armor or armaments are a unit, and the absence of one makes the believer vulnerable. The loss of the helmet, for example, will expose the head to danger; the absence of the belt will hobble the free movement of the soldier at critical moments in battle. Again, the believer is commanded to stand in expectation of battle with the forces of darkness. We are to watch and be ready at all times.

It is expedient that we examine the armor pieces one by one and see their significance to the Christian faith. The first of the armor is the girdle or belt of truth, which is a symbol of integrity in the believer's life. Integrity holds the life of the believer together; without it, all profession is vain and he becomes vulnerable to Satan's attacks. Integrity makes the believer to have good report both within and outside the Christian circle (1 Timothy 3:7).

The second piece of armor is the breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate covers the heart and other vital organs of the body; without it, the Christian soldier is in trouble. Righteousness should be at the center of the believer's life. He receives righteousness as a gift (Ephesians 2:8), and he is expected to continue in real practical righteousness on a moment by moment basis (Romans 6:19). Without righteousness, he will not be able to walk with God, for the Lord loves righteousness and hates iniquity (Hebrews 1:9). Only the life of righteousness can guarantee God's continued presence in life and ministry as well as victory for the believer.

The third piece of armor is the shoe of the gospel. The shoe or boot protects the leg in the battlefield that



is strewn with many metal objects. It also ensures a good grip of the feet in battle. The feet shod with the preparation of the gospel are nothing more than the believer being ready to preach the gospel in season and out of season, when convenient and when not convenient. Unfortunately, the Church has forgotten the command of the Lord to go and preach the gospel to every creature. Believers are preoccupied with what to eat, drink and put on (Matthew 6:31). No wonder there is a lot of backsliding nowadays. The feet that should be on the forward march to rescue the perishing are now moving back into the world. A sure antidote to backsliding is preaching of the gospel!

The fourth armor piece is the shield of faith. A common experience of believers of all ages is the fiery attack that comes from the devil in form of doubt. Not believing God or trusting in His promises has robbed believers of the precious things He has provided for them, and also subjected them to defeat. Momentary unbelief made Moses not to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 20:12). The ten spies perished in the wilderness because they did not believe or trust that God was able to make them overcome the giants in Canaan (Numbers 14:36,37). Satan throws the dart of unbelief into the heart of the Christian in order to make him doubt God's love and faithfulness.

Another piece of armor is the helmet of salvation. The helmet protects the head, the thinking, planning and coordinating center of the body. Nothing graphically illustrates the importance of the head than the story of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:49-51). With all his awe-inspiring physique, when he lost his head, he lost everything. This then shows the importance of salvation. Without it, man is lost eternally. No wonder the Lord admonished the believer to jealously guard his salvation. **“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”** (Mark 8:36).

Finally, we have the sword of the Spirit. When the enemy comes against the believer, he should use the Word to defeat him. It was through the Word that Christ overcame Satan when He was tempted. The devil has no answer or defense against the word of the Lord because

He declared that, **“it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”** (Isaiah 55:11). So, believers should always use the Word in battle.

**Question 3: Mention the pieces of Christian armor and their significance.**

As a kind of ancillary to the armor, the believer is admonished by Paul to pray **“always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit”**. Prayer is the powerhouse of the believer; without it, he remains powerless and ineffective. Prayer should not be self-centered or about mundane things alone; we should pray for other believers and servants of God who are in the van of gospel work. No wonder, Paul asked the believers at Ephesus to pray for him that **“utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel”** (Ephesians 6:19). We need to pray for ministers of the gospel to be divinely inspired so that their ministration will make sinners fall on their feet and receive the Lord. Secondly, we should pray for them to have the courage to speak and uphold the truth, particularly in this error-riddled world. Thirdly, we should pray for them to live out the gospel they preach as any backsliding will affect the faith of many negatively. Finally, we should pray for them to overcome all the forces of the kingdom of darkness that want to destroy their lives.

**Question 4: Why do we need to pray for Christian ministers?**

**REASSURANCES OF GOD’S LOVE AND BLESSING** (Ephesians 6:21-24; Proverbs 27:23; 2 Timothy 4:18)

Paul concluded his treatise on Christian warfare on a positive note. He reassured believers of God’s love and provision of the faith that will tide them over every battle of life, as well as the grace of God **“to help in time of need”**. He did not just send a letter to them, he also sent **“Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord”** (verse 21), who was to show them the way to conduct themselves in the faith and comfort their

hearts. Ministers need to learn lessons from the way Paul cared for his converts.

**Question 5: What can believers learn from Paul's care for the Ephesian believers?**

First, we see his unwavering love and commitment to their welfare. Ministers should not just preach the gospel; they should know the affairs of their converts, even long after they must have preached to them. As Paul employed face-to-face contact via personal visit, ministers should do the same. Where this is not possible, as in the case of Paul who was in prison, we should send faithful ministers to find out their welfare and care for them. Second, Paul taught them the whole truth about the warfare that the believer will face, but also comforted them lest they should become fearful. What a balanced message from a faithful minister! A message that focuses on the activities of the kingdom of darkness emboldens the devil, and one that avoids talking about the battle the Christian will face deceives the people. We should be balanced in our message. The Bible is a balanced book that exposes all truths about the Christian life. Third, he assured the Ephesian Christians of God's grace. Grace trumps all challenges in the life of a believer. We should therefore learn to depend on the grace of God in all circumstances of life.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Matt.	22	Psalms	71-72
TUE	"	23	"	73-74
WED	"	24	"	75-77
THUR	"	25	"	78
FRI	"	26	"	79-80
SAT	"	27	"	81-83
SUN	"	28	"	84-86

**END OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES**

## BEGINNING OF SPECIAL STUDIES

# 739 Lesson

## WORLDLINESS AND WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15)

### **TEXT: 1 John 2:15-17**

**T**here is a dividing line across all humanity, past, present and future. On one side of this divide is the Church, the invisible assembly of all redeemed souls whose lifestyle, conduct, character, disposition and taste are fully dictated by Christ. On the other side is the world, the pervasive evil system orchestrated by the devil which is easily detected in the taste, lifestyle, character, disposition, language, dressing, amusements and recreation of its followers. Worldliness, therefore, is any kind of conformity with the worldly system, practices, dressing or adornment.

There is no meeting point between the world and the Church; they are two irreconcilable systems. The world must not be allowed to come into the Church; but where it has surreptitiously crept in, it must be flushed out. Christ is coming for a pure Church without spot, wrinkle or any such thing. The Church and her entire membership must be completely free of the worldly value system and tradition. This is why the Bible says: **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him”** (1 John 2:15).

Worldliness begins in the heart. It is a secret, inward liking and, later, a craving for the fad, fancies and fashions of the world. It finally begins to show forth in the lifestyle of its victims.

**Question 1: What is worldliness and how does it begin?**

When the people of the world (friends, colleagues, relations, neighbors, etc.) dictate and determine your

taste in dressing, you are becoming worldly. When your heart begins to yearn after the trends and contemporary vogue in the world, worldliness is setting in. When a supposed Christian marriage attracts all the traditions, styles, conduct and showy spirit seen in the marriage of sinners, the world is setting in. And God warns in His Word: **“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”** (James 4:4). Neither the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ nor the epistles of the Apostles grant the believer license to be worldly. The believer must separate himself from the world.

**EXPRESSIONS OF WORLDLINESS** (1 John 2:15-17; Isaiah 3:16-24; Matthew 24:38)

The Bible draws a picture of the world in its true color. More than that, it declares, in many ways and in many places, that it is sensual, devilish, doomed and distorting. Dressing is one area where worldliness in the heart speaks loudly and clearly. Christians are not to dress like the world. The spirit that dictates the fashion of the world is that of the devil. It thrives on sinful passions or vices that do not rest until they set the opposite sexes lusting and making them to commit sin. This spirit and the fashions or designs it dictates are a continual constant digression from God, holiness and righteousness.

Adornments copied from the world, which reflects the pride of life and the cravings of a carnal spirit must, like a plague, be avoided. Some Christian mothers pierce the ears of their female children. Had it been necessary, God would have done it from heaven. Had it been needful like circumcision, He would have given it like a commandment. One wonders how a Christian mother could watch her daughter being subjected to a painful piercing exercise just to look like the world. A spirit is surely behind this!

Worldliness is also seen in ceremonies. When a marriage is attended by all that goes on in the world – renting, borrowing or hiring of dresses; excessive spending which leads to indebtedness; immodest dressing – it is worldly.

The guiding principle of a Christian is modesty and moderation. “ **Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand**” (Philippians 4:5).

**Question 2: Mention some of the common expressions of worldliness.**

Besides dresses, ceremonies and adornments, there are some assemblies or gatherings that are essentially worldly and sinful. When meetings are held to foster the carnal desires of the flesh, inflame the mind and make it to dance off godly sorrows that are necessary in preparing the heart for the seed of the Word, a Christian must keep away. Whether it is outright disco gatherings or its religious equivalent “praisco”, it is worldly.

A pilgrim to heaven has no business with the conferment of chieftaincy titles under whatever guise. Frequenting salons for trendy fashions, unspoken competitive social outlook, lust of the eyes and pride of life are worldly. These cannot help fix the gaze of a Christian heavenward. If anything, it blows cool the steam in the heart of the Christian and quenches the smouldering ‘flame’ in the young believer. “**Abstain from all appearance of evil**” (1 Thessalonians 5:22) commands the Lord.

**Question 3: Why should a Christian avoid worldly gatherings?**

**RATIONALIZATION OF WORLDLINESS** (Revelation 22:18,19; James 3:15; Romans 12:2)

Some Christians want to have the best of two worlds. They want all the privileges of the kingdom while they simultaneously hobnob with the world. They twist scriptures to make allowance for their worldly dispositions. They explain off fundamental truths and principles enunciated in the Word of God and by implication, remove ancient landmarks set in God’s word. “**For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from**

**the things which are written in the book**" (Revelation 22:18,19).

How do these modern heretics rationalize worldliness? Those who indulge and persist in worldly dressing and adornment, even after they have come to the knowledge of the truth, say their immodest dressing is designed to expand the kingdom of God. They claim that they join sinners in their worldly styles in order to invite them into the kingdom of God. They eloquently say, "join them to win them". But the Scripture says: **"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"** (Romans 12:2). Moreover, some opine that what they put on does not matter since salvation is in their hearts. But they err. If our hearts are saved and conformed to the Lord, our outward comportment will definitely follow suit.

Worse still, some assent that their models are Western or American Church leaders who live in Hollywood style, deck up in jewelry and pride in flamboyancy. They have forgotten that Jesus taught that we should be like Him, not like any preacher. **"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple"** (Luke 14:26,27).

There are those who say that if they do not wear a worldly look, they will lose their job. They, therefore, slide back into the world. What an awful path to spiritual death and eternal separation from God! Those who go into worldliness under this guise forget that their soul should not be sacrificed on the altar of worldliness.

Certainly, the Lord did not teach His disciples in vain to **"seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..."** (Matthew 6:33). Such Christians who cannot decide what to do with such jobs have probably forgotten that **"if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that**

**thy whole body should be cast into hell”** (Matthew 5:29).

**Question 4: In what ways do people try to rationalize worldliness today?**

**DANGERS OF WORLDLINESS AND WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS** (Luke 21:34; Titus 2:12; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4)

Modern technology, idleness of mind, and a careless rush for money at the expense of the soul, have filled our cities with all sorts of amusements and time-killers, euphemistically described as ‘fun’. This is a dangerous trend and the believer must beware!

Worldliness is not only dangerous but deadly. Its effects are described in very negative terms in the Bible. James pictures the worldly Christian as an enemy of God and a friend of the world (James 4:4). Second, worldliness leads to backsliding. One of the early signs of backsliding is a tendency towards the world. Third, if worldliness is allowed in the church, it leads to loss of conviction and corruption. Fourth, if worldliness is allowed in individual lives or a local assembly, the presence and power of God would diminish or even disappear. Fifth, worldliness disallows the building of godly homes. Sixth, worldly amusements bring about carnal competition in the church. Seventh, worldliness incurs the wrath of God and this is fatal. Eighth, worldly amusements weaken the church and individual lives as people spend precious time on trifles and vanities. When the membership of a church is given to amusements, little or no time is left for evangelism, visitation, follow-up and other services that have eternal value. Ninth, worldliness destroys the future of the church and makes nominal Christians of her membership. It must, therefore, be avoided like a plague.

**Question: 5: What inherent dangers do worldliness pose to the individual and the church at large?**



## DAILY BIBLE READING

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Mark	1	Psalms	87-88
TUE	“	2-3	“	89
WED	“	4	“	90-91
THUR	“	5	“	92-94
FRI	“	6	“	95-98
SAT	“	7	“	99-102
SUN	“	8	“	103-04

# 740 Lesson

## CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIVING

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

**TEXT:** Genesis 5:22-24; 17:1, Matthew 5:48  
Ephesians 6:10-18

One of the negative end-time prophecies of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is that the love of many Christians shall wax cold. Its fulfillment, as Christendom is presently witnessing, spells grave consequences. It is obvious now that many who were once zealous and committed to the Lord are losing their first love and enthusiasm with which they served God. This is because the god of this world has enticed them with materialism into spiritual sleep and inertia, and sowed tares of discord, misfortune and sickness into their lives. Manipulated by the enemy, these Christians lose their conviction as their fellowship with God and His people become irregular. They have consequently become unstable and unpredictable in character, and unfaithful to God and His church.

Outright backsliding has become rampant. With this development, Christ, who always knows what to do, charges fervent believers and the church to wake up to their responsibility of reviving despondent, weak, lukewarm and inconsistent believers. **“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent...”** (Revelation 3:2,3). Saved from sin or restored from backsliding, the believer needs to maintain a consistent righteous life to qualify to enter heaven.

**THE CHARACTER OF HEAVENLY PILGRIMS:**  
(Genesis 5:22-24; 17:1; Hebrews 11:5,6,13-16;

Philippians 3:20).

Enoch, son of Jared and father of Methuselah, is mentioned in our text as one who maintained a consistent, God-pleasing lifestyle throughout his lifetime. According to Scripture account, he knew God at the age of 65 and walked with Him for 300 years. That he lived in the Old Testament period before the cross, strips inconsistent believers of excuses they give for rising and falling in the Christian faith. Enoch lived in this same wicked world infested with demons as we do today. Moreover, with the death and resurrection of Christ, every earnest seeker can live a consistent Christian life. If it is not possible to live a righteous life, God would not have called Abraham to it (Genesis 17:1).

**Question 1: State the indispensable step to a consistent Christian living.**

However, the call to salvation precedes the call to consistent Christian living and perfection. Abraham had first responded to the call to come out of sin unto salvation and separation before this time. None is on pilgrimage to heaven until they are genuinely saved from sin. Pilgrimages to holy lands and engagement in religious rites/duties do not set the religionist free from sin. Every sinner and backslider need to repent of their sins and receive Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior to be free from sin.

Set free from sin that binds and inhibits spiritual progress, the believer begins to live a life of victory over sin, the flesh, self, the world and the devil. He is careful to **“walk with God”** and **“walk before God”** in righteousness. These phrases suggest that the believer consciously walks side by side with, lives and does everything under the watchful, never-blinking eyes of God (Psalm 139:1-12). As sane human beings do not want to expose their nakedness before the camera, so also the believer would not want to do evil while the omniscient and omnipresent God watches. These attributes of God, together with the fact that He is the final Judge who knows the minutest detail of our lives, should instill holy fear in the believer and enable him to live a consistent Christian life.

Besides, maintaining a consistent Christian life

requires courage and faith. The heroes of faith grouped with Enoch and Abraham in Hebrews chapter 11 also regarded as “**strangers and pilgrims on earth**” all had their problems, difficulties, temptations, trials and challenges. Rather than give in, they exercised faith in God and were victorious. The challenges we face as believers will not last; we will continue to overcome if we lean on the Lord.

**CAUSES OF INCONSISTENCY AND BACKSLIDING:**  
(Matthew 24:12; Genesis 19:26; 2 Timothy 4:10; 2:16-18; Zephaniah 1:12; 1 Timothy 6:9,10)

The heroes of faith focused their desire and attention on the city of God. “**But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city**” (Hebrews 11:16). Just as they did not allow their challenges to overcome them, they were not divided in heart and aspirations like Lot’s wife. They forgot the sinful world and lifestyle that existed in it when they came out. To this end, Paul the apostle exhorted believers to set their affections on things above where Christ is. Demas returned to the world because he loved it just like some believers who have not burned the bridge that linked them with the world. They want to enjoy the best of two worlds. But Christ says no one can serve two masters and fervently love both at the same time. Therefore, those who seek to maintain a consistent life of holiness with God must be crucified to the world.

False doctrines are deadly to the spiritual health of a Christian. Beliefs in purgatory, unconditional security of saved souls, continuing to live on earth without any hope of going to heaven, etc. engender licentious, careless living. The antidote to being poisoned by false doctrines is diligence in acquiring the word of God in both personal and congregational study of the Word (2 Timothy 2:15-18).

The devil may allow a man to start the journey to heaven but he will do all he can to obstruct him from making heaven. In these last days, he uses scoffers to dissuade believers from continuing on the path of righteousness (2 Peter

3:3-11). The global economic recession is another factor that can divert the attention of the heaven-bound pilgrim. Some would even dare to deny the faith in an attempt to survive in these last days. But the Bible warns: **“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth”** (Luke 12:15). Men are apt to forget God during promotion and prosperity (2 Chronicles 25:14). It is possible for a fervent believer to grow cold gradually until he loses all the good virtues he once had. Other causes of inconsistency in Christian living are fear of men (1 Samuel 15:24), evil association (1 Kings 11:4), stony hearts (Luke 8:13), spiritual laziness and emptiness (Zechariah 1:12), unbelief (John 6:64,66), love of the world (2 Timothy 4:10), lust of the flesh (Proverbs 7:6-27) and quest for materialism (1 Timothy 6:10).

**Question 2: Mention the causes of inconsistency of believers in the faith.**

**CALL TO CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY IN HOLINESS:** (Genesis 17:1; Matthew 5:48; 1Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:15,16; Luke 1:74,75; Acts 11:23; Galatians 5:1; Ephesians 4:14; Philippians 1:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Peter 3:17; Hebrews 12:14; 13:12,13)

**Question 3: Why is it necessary for believers to respond to God’s call to consistent holy living?**

God’s demand for a perfect lifestyle and consistent holy living is not limited to any generation. He is holy; He desires as well as demands that all who worship and walk with Him live holily. **“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”** (Matthew 5:48). As He called Abraham to lead a perfect life, so has He called every believer to this same experience. **“For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness”** (1 Thessalonians 4:7). God’s call to perfection or holy living is not limited to a particular day, week, month or period of time in our lives; we are to walk **“in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life”** (Luke 1:75). You can experience this holiness, sanctification or purity of heart through prayer and

faith in the blood of Christ.

**Question 4: How then can a believer maintain a consistent walk with the Lord?**

Our text gives us the antidote to backsliding. **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might”** (Ephesians 6:10). Believers are enjoined to be strong in the Lord and to make use of divine ability. God’s power is strong enough to keep all His children (1 Peter 1:5). And this requires that the believer knows the devices of the enemy, take the entire spiritual armor provided by Christ and constantly engage in spiritual warfare. **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”** (Ephesians 6:12). No Christian can afford to trifle with the devil and his cohorts. The believer is in constant warfare with the devil and his agents. The methods of the devil are so complex that the believer needs to put on the whole armor of God at all times. The devil is at work night and day trying to entrap, enslave and ruin the careless believer. Consistency is synonymous with putting on the whole armor of God. You need to remain committed to the truth and put on the breastplate of righteousness. Holiness is a great weapon in spiritual warfare; it is a shield that protects from backsliding. It is not possible to maintain a consistent walk with God without living a consistent life of holiness.

The Bible also commands believers to be consistent in winning souls to the Lord. Their feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Soul-winning is an important weapon as far as victorious Christian living is concerned. Also, you need to make use of the shield of faith. Develop your faith always. None can live the consistent Christian life without walking by faith.

Prayer is an important weapon for consistent Christians. The Bible enjoins us to pray **“always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints”**. The believer who wants to walk with God

consistently needs to pray frequently. He will be able to “**stand**” unconquered by the enemy. Gluttony and talkativeness must not shut the believer’s mouth from praying. Also, overmuch sleep leads to spiritual poverty. Men ought always to pray and not to faint. The praying Christian is a powerful Christian. The believer who adds fasting to prayer of faith becomes impregnable: he will be able to abide in the will and word of God and have divine energy with which to do exploits for God. After all, the goal of consistent Christian living is to bear fruits of righteousness and soul-winning to the glory of God.

**THE REWARD FOR CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIVING:**  
(Exodus 19:5; Matthew 5:8; Numbers 32:12; Joshua 14:12-14; Numbers 23:21-24; Daniel 1:8,19,20; Ruth 1:16; 4:13-22; Philippians 3:7,8; Psalm 103:17,18; Matthew 24:13)

Believers who maintain a consistent lifestyle of purity will be peculiar treasures unto the Lord. They will experience increasing abiding presence of God. The pure in heart shall see God and shall receive divine intervention of answers to prayers. They shall see the move of God in their lives and ministry on earth and live with Him in heaven.

To grow in this experience demands that the believer must wholeheartedly follow the Lord, constantly examines his life and conduct to make sure they are Scripture-based, sincerely renews his vow to walk with and serve the Lord. He must be ready to deny self, carry his cross and forgo even legitimate things that inhibits his entire consecration to the Lord and his holy pilgrimage to heaven. Joshua, Daniel, Ruth, Paul the apostle, etc. were consistent and faithful in their walk with God and they were blessed and used for the glory of God. So also were Enoch and Abraham in our text. Enoch in particular was translated to glory without seeing death, giving hope of eternal bliss in heaven to every believer who lives a consistent holy life. It is obvious that those who do not maintain a consistent holy and obedient lifestyle will not be able to enter heaven (Matthew 7:21-23). But the believer who is steadfast and faithful in God’s service will be blessed on earth and rewarded in heaven by the

Lord.

## DAILY BIBLE READING

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Mark	9	Psalms	105
TUE	“	10	“	106
WED	“	11	“	107
THUR	“	12	“	108-109
FRI	“	13	“	110-113
SAT	“	14	“	114-118
SUN	“	15	“	19



# 741 Lesson

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen ” (Revelation 1:7).

**TEXT:** Matthew 25:29-46; Jude 14,15; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-21

The Scripture teaches that the Second Coming of Christ will be just as literal and visible as His going away. At His coming, He will execute judgment upon the ungodly, set up His kingdom and reign on this present earth for a thousand years. This is the uniform teaching of both the Old and New Testament scriptures.

**CLARIFICATION OF CHRIST’S SECOND COMING:** (Matthew 24:16-20,27-30; Zechariah 14:3,4; 1Corinthians 3:12-15; 2Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 19:18,19)

**Question 1:** Explain the scriptural teaching of Christ’s Second Coming.

Christ will come the second time immediately after the seven-year Great Tribulation. The period of the Great Tribulation will start from the time the Church disappears at rapture. Prior to His Second Coming, the children of Israel will be greatly persecuted during the tribulation until they cry to the Messiah, whom they previously rejected, to deliver them. The Lord will return to save the penitent nation of Israel from the desolator, the Antichrist (Matthew 24:16-20,27-30).

Thus, the rapture of the saints will precede the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ. However, the rapture should not be confused with the Second Coming. The two events are distinct and separated by seven years. Specifically, the second coming refers to Christ’s coming to the earth to be seen by all eyes. At rapture, He will not come to the earth but will remain in

the air where the saints will meet Him. It is not every eye that will see Him at the rapture.

When Christ meets the saints in the air, He will take them to heaven before the commencement of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 19:18,19). It is during this seven-year period that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and the judgment of saints for reward would take place in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). In other words, the rapture is the time Christ comes for the saints to take them to heaven. At the second coming, however, He will come to the earth to live and fulfill a definite part of God's time-table for the earth and man. He will return with the saints raptured seven years earlier. Whereas the rapture can take place any moment without warning, the Second Coming cannot happen until after both the rapture and the Great Tribulation.

**Question 2: What are the differences between the rapture and Christ's Second Coming?**

**PROOFS AND CERTAINTY OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING** (Matthew 24:4-7,9-11,23-27,30,37; Mark 13:9,13; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 5:4; 1:7; Hebrews 10:27; Acts 1:11)

The Scriptures abound with proofs of the certainty of Christ's Second Coming. Our Lord Jesus spoke of His return several times and the signs that would herald it. A study of the scriptures indicate that certain prophecies concerning it and some future programs of God are not yet fulfilled and would only be, after the second advent of Christ. However, all the signs preceding the second advent are being fulfilled daily.

Going through the Olivet discourse of Matthew 24 and 25, the following signs of His coming are clear: Jesus Himself said, there would be deceptions (Matthew 24:4,5,11,24), false Christ's (Matthew 24:5,23-26), wars and rumours of wars (Matthew 24:6,7), famines (Matthew 24:7), pestilences, earthquakes, anti-semitism (Matthew 24:9; Mark 13:9,13), offences (Matthew 24:10), betrayals, hatred, false prophets (Matthew 24:11), lawlessness and martyrdom. He said the impact of the

Second Coming will be as universal as when “**the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west...**” It would make all “**the tribes of the earth to mourn**”. They would be deep in spiritual lethargy and indifference as was the case in the time of Noah’s flood (Matthew 24:27,30,37).

These descriptions of the social conditions of the last days is both frightening and gloomy. Paul the apostle writes in his epistle to Timothy that love of self will characterize the last days. There will also be cultural, scientific and technological advancement while spiritual ignorance will permeate the society. In spite of these admonitions and warnings from the Lord and His apostles about deceivers and signs of the last days, thousands have been entrapped in the web of false doctrines and sinful practices. In fact, the very widespread deception of nominal Christianity constitutes a greater danger that makes the ground slippery for those who sincerely seek to escape the damnation of hell (1 Timothy 4:1).

**Question 3: What are the signs of Christ’s Second Coming?**

Jesus spoke with deftness and certainty about His Second Coming. “**And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven**” (Mark 14:62). Added to the personal promise and prophecy of Jesus about His Second Coming is the announcement of angelic heralds at His ascension to heaven. Jesus, they said, “**shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven**” (Acts 1:11). The angels’ message that Jesus shall come back in like manner makes the interpretation of His personal, bodily and visible return undoubtable. The Holy Spirit, through the apostles, confirmed that Christ shall appear “**the second time**” (Hebrews 9:28).

**PURPOSE OF CHRIST’S SECOND COMING** (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 4:21; Isaiah 32:18; 33:20-24; Revelation 20:11-15; Isaiah 67:17; 66:22; Revelation 21:1; Jeremiah 12:4,11; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

The prophecy in Isaiah 9:6 that the government (of the whole world) would be on Christ’s shoulders, relating

to His Second Coming to reign literally on earth is yet to be fulfilled. Similar prophecies in Isaiah 61 would be fully fulfilled at His Second Coming.

The exactitude with which the old time prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ were fulfilled points to the infallibility of the Scriptures and to the certainty of those prophecies concerning His second advent. As prophecies concerning His virgin birth and details of His earthly life, death, burial and resurrection were all literally fulfilled to the letter, so would those relating to His Second Coming. A writer puts the subject of Christ's Second Coming thus: "Jesus will come again in just real and literal manner as He came the first time. No other interpretation of the Second Coming is consistent with the teaching of Scripture".

This imminent return of Christ is the glorious hope of the Church. One in every twenty-five verses in the New Testament pertains to the Lord's Second Coming. And there are more mention of the it than the subjects of personal salvation.

<b>Question 4: Why is Christ coming the second time?</b>
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Apart from the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Christ, other divine purposes which the second advent would fulfill include the comfort of the Church (John 14:1-3; 16:20-22); the restoration of Israel to her sovereignty as prophesied in the Scripture (Isaiah 32:18; 33:20-24); the judgment of the earth (Revelation 20:11-15; John 5:22); the renovation of the earth (Isaiah 67:17; 66:22; Revelation 21:1); and the restoration of all things (Romans 8:20-23; Jeremiah 12:4,11). At His Second Coming, Christ will reward His faithful servants with crowns of glory, praise and honor, and His adversaries with fiery indignation (1 Peter 5:4; 1:7; Hebrews 10:27).

**CHRIST'S TRIUMPH AT THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON** (Isaiah 11:1-9; Revelation 20:1-4; 19:11-21; 17:13,14)

Satan and his cohorts will mobilize forces to fight Christ and to frustrate His coming again to establish

the Millennial Reign, just the same way he used Herod in his attempt to kill Christ at His first coming. He was defeated and he will be defeated again. The battle against Christ and His host is called the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-21; 20:1-4). There will be a great and terrible slaughter of the armies of the Anti-christ gathered from the nations of the earth through the efforts of the evil spirits sent out over the earth by Satan, the Anti-christ and the false prophet (Revelation 17:13,14). This last attempt to wrongfully take the Kingdom from Christ will fail.

Christ will triumph in battle over Satan, the author of strifes and contention and bind him for one thousand years (Revelation 20:2,3). Thus, Christ will reign on the earth for a thousand years with the saints. His rule would be characterized by unprecedented peace, prosperity and blessings on the earth (Isaiah 11:1-9). Every believer should aspire to be there. The admonition of James the apostle to believers in view of this is: **“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth near”** (James 5:8).

**Question 5: Explain the battle of Armageddon and the predicted losers and Victor.**

**PREPARATION FOR CHRIST’S SECOND COMING:** (John 3:1-8; Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 3:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:1,2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 1:7)

**Question 6: How should sinners and believers prepare for the Second Coming of Christ?**

Sinners and saints are called to prepare for this great event. While sinners are admonished to repent and come to Christ before the day of the Lord (John 3:1-8), the Church as a bride is called to be ready, holy, spotless, watchful, prayerful and busy preaching His word until He comes (Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 3:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:1,2; Ephesians 5:25-27)

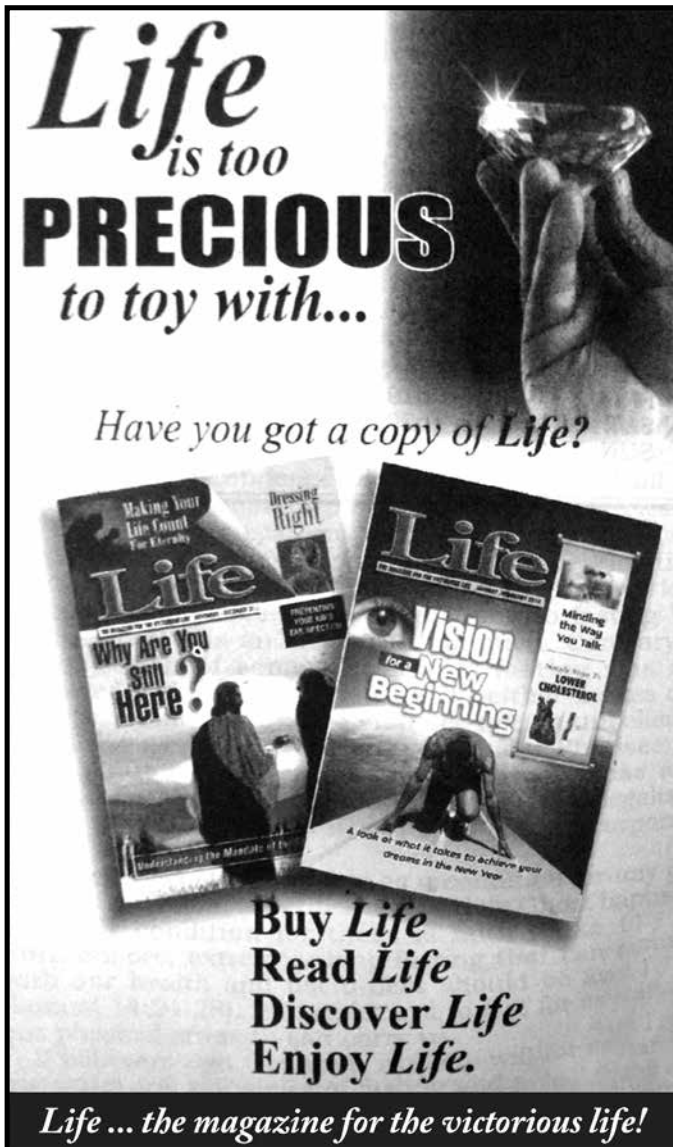
## DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING			EVENING	
MON	Mark	16	Psalms	120-125
TUE	Luke	1	“	127-134
WED	“	2	“	135-136
THUR	“	3	“	137-139
FRI	“	4	“	140-142
SAT	“	5	“	143-145
SUN	“	6	“	146-147

**THE END OF THE STUDIES, BUT BE ADVISED THE WORD OF GOD IS TIMELESS (DOES NOT BECOME OBSOLETE AT ANY TIME). THEREFORE, ENDEAVOR TO KEEP THIS BOOK HANDY.**

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#### **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE**

New Jersey	9:00 AM
Bronx/Brooklyn/Queens/Staten Island	9:00 AM
Rockland County	10:30 AM

#### **MONDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Rockland County	7:00 PM
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#### **TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Bronx/Queens/New Jersey/Co-op City and Staten Island	7:00 PM
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#### **WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Brooklyn	7:00 PM
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#### **THURSDAY (REVIVAL SERVICE) FAITH CLINIC**

Rockland County	7:00 PM
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#### **FRIDAY (REVIVAL SERVICE) FAITH CLINIC**

All the Church Locations except Rockland County	7:00 PM
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#### **ALL NIGHT PRAYER VIGILS**

Bronx – First Friday of Every Month	7:00 PM
Brooklyn – Last Friday of Every Month	11:00 PM
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